Dhammapada

a translation



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A TRANSLATION

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Preface

Another translation of the Dhammapada.

Many other English translations are already available—the fingers of at least five people would be needed to count them—so I suppose that a new translation has to be justified, to prove that it's not "just" another one. In doing so, though, I'd rather not criticize the efforts of earlier translators, for I owe them a great deal. Instead, I'll ask you to read the Introduction and Historical Notes, to gain an idea of what is distinctive about the approach I have taken, and the translation itself, which I hope will stand on its own merits. The original impulse for making the translation came from my conviction that the text deserved to be offered freely as a gift of Dhamma. As I knew of no existing translations available as gifts, I made my own.

The explanatory material is designed to meet with the needs of two sorts of readers: those who want to read the text as a text, in the context of the religious history of Buddhism—viewed from the outside—and those who want to read the text as a guide to the personal conduct of their lives. Although there is no clear line dividing these groups, the Introduction is aimed more at the second group, and the Historical Notes more at the

first. The End Notes and Glossary contain material that should be of interest to both. Verses marked with an asterisk in the translation are discussed in the End Notes. Pali terms—as well as English terms used in a special sense, such as *effluent, enlightened one, fabrication, stress,* and *Unbinding*—when they appear in more than one verse, are explained in the Glossary.

In addition to the previous translators and editors from whose work I have borrowed, I owe a special debt of gratitude to Jeanne Larsen for her help in honing down the language of the translation. Also, John Bullitt, Charles Hallisey, Karen King, Andrew Olendzki, Ruth Stiles, Clark Strand, Paula Trahan, and Jane Yudelman offered many helpful comments that improved the quality of the book as a whole. Any mistakes that remain, of course, are my own responsibility.

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Introduction

The Dhammapada, an anthology of verses attributed to the Buddha, has long been recognized as one of the masterpieces of early Buddhist literature. Only more recently have scholars realized that it is also one of the early masterpieces in the Indian tradition of *kavya*, or belles lettres.

This translation of the Dhammapada is an attempt to render the verses into English in a way that does justice to both of the traditions to which the text belongs. Although it is tempting to view these traditions as distinct, dealing with form (kavya) and content (Buddhism), the ideals of kavya aimed at combining form and content into a seamless whole. At the same time, the early Buddhists adopted and adapted the conventions of kavya in a way that skillfully dovetailed with their views of how teaching and listening played a role in their path of practice. My hope is that the translation presented here will convey the same seamlessness and skill.

As an example of kavya, the Dhammapada has a fairly complete body of ethical and aesthetic theory behind it, for the purpose of kavya was to instruct in the highest ends of life while simultaneously giving delight. The ethical teaching of the Dhammapada is expressed in the first pair of verses: the mind, through its actions

(kamma), is the chief architect of one's happiness and suffering both in this life and beyond. The first three chapters elaborate on this point, to show that there are two major ways of relating to this fact: as a wise person, who is heedful enough to make the necessary effort to train his/her own mind to be a skillful architect; and as a fool, who is heedless and sees no reason to train the mind.

The work as a whole elaborates on this distinction, showing in more detail both the path of the wise person and that of the fool, together with the rewards of the former and the dangers of the latter: the path of the wise person can lead not only to happiness within the cycle of death and rebirth, but also to total escape into the Deathless, beyond the cycle entirely; the path of the fool leads not only to suffering now and in the future, but also to further entrapment within the cycle. The purpose of the Dhammapada is to make the wise path attractive to the reader so that he/she will follow it—for the dilemma posited by the first pair of verses is not one in the imaginary world of fiction; it is the dilemma in which the reader is already placed by the fact of being born.

To make the wise path attractive, the techniques of poetry are used to give "savor" *(rasa)* to the message. Ancient Indian aesthetic treatises devoted a great deal of discussion to the notion of savor and how it could be conveyed. The basic theory was this: Artistic composition expressed states of emotion or states of mind called "*bhava*." The standard list of basic emotions included love (delight), humor, grief, anger, energy, fear, disgust,

and astonishment. The reader or listener exposed to these presentations of emotion did not participate in them directly; rather, he/she savored them as an aesthetic experience at one remove from the emotion. Thus, the savor of grief is not grief, but compassion. The savor of energy is not energy itself, but admiration for heroism. The savor of love is not love but an experience of sensitivity. The savor of astonishment is a sense of the marvelous. The proof of the indirectness of the aesthetic experience was that some of the basic emotions were decidedly unpleasant, while the savor of the emotion was to be enjoyed.

Although a work of art might depict many emotions, and thus—like a good meal—offer many savors for the reader/listener to taste, one savor was supposed to dominate. Writers made a common practice of announcing the savor they were trying to produce, usually stating in passing that their particular savor was the highest of all. The Dhammapada [354] states explicitly that the savor of Dhamma is the highest savor, which indicates that that is the basic savor of the work. Classic aesthetic theory lists the savor of Dhamma, or justice, as one of the three basic varieties of the heroic savor (the other two deal with generosity and war): thus we would expect the majority of the verses to depict energy, and in fact they do, with their exhortations to action, strong verbs, repeated imperatives, and frequent use of the imagery from battles, races, and conquests.

Dhamma, in the Buddhist sense, implies more than the "justice" of Dhamma in aesthetic theory. However, the long section of the Dhammapada devoted to "The Judge"—beginning with a definition of a good judge, and continuing with examples of good judgment—shows that the Buddhist concept of Dhamma has room for the aesthetic meaning of the term as well.

Classic theory also holds that the heroic savor should, especially at the end of a piece, shade into the marvelous. This, in fact, is what happens periodically throughout the Dhammapada, and especially at the end, where the verses express astonishment at the amazing and paradoxical qualities of a person who has followed the path of heedfulness to its end, becoming "pathless" [92-93; 179-180]—totally indescribable, transcending conflicts and dualities of every sort. Thus the predominant emotions that the verses express in Pali—and should also express in translation—are energy and astonishment, so as to produce qualities of the heroic and marvelous for the reader to savor. This savor is then what inspires the reader to follow the path of wisdom, with the result that he/she will reach a direct experience of the true happiness, transcending all dualities, found at the end of the path.

Classic aesthetic theory lists a variety of rhetorical features that can produce savor. Examples from these lists that can be found in the Dhammapada include: accumulation *(padoccaya)* [137-140], admonitions *(upadista)* [47-48, 246-248, et. al.], ambiguity *(aksarasamghata)* [97, 294-295],

benedictions *(asis)* [337], distinctions *(visesana)* [19-20, 21-22, 318-319], encouragement *(protsahana)* [35, 43, 46, et. al.], etymology *(nirukta)* [388], examples *(drstanta)* [30], explanations of cause and effect *(hetu)* [1-2], illustrations *(udaharana)* [344], implications *(arthapatti)* [341], rhetorical questions *(prccha)* [44, 62, 143, et. al.], praise *(gunakirtana)* [54-56, 58-59, 92-93, et. al.], prohibitions *(pratisedha)* [121-122, 271-272, 371, et. al.], and ornamentation *(bhusana)* [passim].

Of these, ornamentation is the most complex, including four figures of speech and ten "qualities." The figures of speech are simile [passim], extended metaphor [398], rhyme (including alliteration and assonance), and "lamps" [passim]. This last figure is a peculiarity of Pali—a heavily inflected language—that allows, say, one adjective to modify two different nouns, or one verb to function in two separate sentences. (The name of the figure derives from the idea that the two nouns radiate from the one adjective, or the two sentences from the one verb.) In English, the closest we have to this is parallelism combined with ellipsis. An example from the translation is in verse 7—

Mara overcomes him
as the wind, a weak tree

—where "overcomes" functions as the verb in both clauses, even though it is elided from the second. This is how I have rendered lamps in most of the verses, although in two cases [174, 206] I found it more effective to repeat the lamp-word.

The ten "qualities" are more general attributes of sound, syntax, and sense, including such attributes as charm, clarity, delicacy, evenness, exaltation, sweetness, and strength. The ancient texts are not especially clear on what some of these terms mean in practice. Even where they are clear, the terms deal in aspects of Pali/Sanskrit syntax not always applicable to English. What is important, though, is that some qualities are seen as more suited to a particular savor than others: strength and exaltation, for example, best convey a taste of the heroic and marvelous. Of these characteristics, strength *(ojas)* is the easiest to quantify, for it is marked by long compounded words. In the Dhammapada, approximately one tenth of the verses contain compounds that are as long as a whole line of verse, and one verse [39] has three of its four lines made up of such compounds. By the standards of later Sanskrit verse, this is rather mild, but when compared with verses in the rest of the Pali Canon and other early masterpieces of kavya, the Dhammapada is quite strong.

The text also explicitly adds to the theory of characteristics in saying that "sweetness" is not just an attribute of words, but of the person speaking [363]. If the person is a true example of the virtue espoused, his/her words are sweet. This point could be generalized to cover many of the other qualities as well.

Another point from classic aesthetic theory that may be relevant to the Dhammapada is the principle of how a literary work is given unity. Although the text does not

provide a step-by-step sequential portrait of the path of wisdom, as a lyric anthology it is much more unified than most Indian examples of that genre. The classic theory of dramatic plot construction may be playing an indirect role here. On the one hand, a plot must exhibit unity by presenting a conflict or dilemma, and depicting the attainment of a goal through overcoming that conflict. This is precisely what unifies the Dhammapada: it begins with the duality between heedless and heedful ways of living, and ends with the final attainment of total mastery. On the other hand, the plot must not show smooth, systematic progress; otherwise the work would turn into a treatise. There must be reversals and diversions to maintain interest. This principle is at work in the fairly unsystematic ordering of the Dhammapada's middle sections. Verses dealing with the beginning stages of the path are mixed together with those dealing with later stages and even stages beyond the completion of the path.

One more point is that the ideal plot should be constructed with a sub-plot in which a secondary character gains his/her goal, and in so doing helps the main character attain his or hers. In addition to the aesthetic pleasure offered by the sub-plot, the ethical lesson is one of human cooperation: people attain their goals by working together. In the Dhammapada, the same dynamic is at work. The main "plot" is that of the person who masters the principle of kamma to the point of total release from kamma and the round of rebirth; the "sub-plot" depicts

the person who masters the principle of kamma to the point of gaining a good rebirth on the human or heavenly planes. The second person gains his/her goal, in part, by being generous and respectful to the first person [106-109, 177], thus enabling the first person to practice to the point of total mastery. In return, the first person gives counsel to the second person on how to pursue his/her goal [76-77, 363]. In this way the Dhammapada depicts the play of life in a way that offers two potentially heroic roles for the reader to choose from, and delineates those roles in such a way that all people can choose to be heroic, working together for the attainment of their own true well being.

Perhaps the best way to summarize the confluence of Buddhist and kavya traditions in the Dhammapada is in light of a teaching from another early Buddhist text, the Samyutta Nikaya (LV.5), on the factors needed to attain one's first taste of the goal of the Buddhist path. Those factors are four: associating with people of integrity, listening to their teachings, using appropriate attention to inquire into the way those teachings apply to one's life, and practicing in line with the teachings in a way that does them justice. Early Buddhists used the traditions of kavya—concerning savor, rhetoric, structure, and figures of speech—primarily in connection with the second of these factors, in order to make the teachings appealing to the listener. However, the question of savor is related to the other three factors as well. The words of a teaching must be spoken by a person of integrity who embodies

their message in his/her actions if their savor is to be sweet [158, 363]. The listener must reflect on them appropriately and then put them into practice if they are to have more than a passing, superficial taste. Thus both the speaker and listener must act in line with the words of a teaching if it is to bear fruit. This point is reflected in a pair of verses from the Dhammapada itself [51-52]:

> Just like a blossom,
> bright colored
> but scentless:
> a well-spoken word
> is fruitless
> when not carried out.
>
> Just like a blossom,
> bright colored
> & full of scent:
> a well-spoken word
> is fruitful
> when well carried out.

Appropriate reflection, the first step a listener should follow in carrying out the well-spoken word, means contemplating one's own life to see the dangers of following the path of foolishness and the need to follow the path of wisdom. The Buddhist tradition recognizes two emotions as playing a role in this reflection. The first is *samvega,* a strong sense of dismay that comes with realizing the futility and meaningless of life as it is normally

lived, together with a feeling of urgency in trying to find a way out of the meaningless cycle. The second emotion is *pasada,* the clarity and serenity that come when one recognizes a teaching that presents the truth of the dilemma of existence and at the same time points the way out. One function of the verses in the Dhammapada is to provide this sense of clarity, which is why verse 82 states that the wise grow serene on hearing the Dhamma, and 102 states that the most worthwhile verse is the meaningful one that, on hearing, brings peace.

However, the process does not stop with these preliminary feelings of peace and serenity. The listener must carry through with the path of practice that the verses recommend. Although much of the impetus for doing so comes from the emotions of samvega and pasada sparked by the content of the verses, the heroic and marvelous savor of the verses plays a role as well, by inspiring the listener to rouse within him or herself the energy and strength that the path will require. When the path is brought to fruition, it brings the peace and delight of the Deathless [373-374]. This is where the process initiated by hearing or reading the Dhamma bears its deepest savor, surpassing all others. It is the highest sense in which the meaningful verses of the Dhammapada bring peace.

In preparing the following translation, I have kept the above points in mind, motivated both by a firm belief in the truth of the message of the Dhammapada, and by a desire to present it in a compelling way that will

induce the reader to put it into practice. Although trying to stay as close as possible to the literal meaning of the text, I've also tried to convey its savor. I'm operating on the classic assumption that, although there may be a tension between giving instruction (being scrupulously accurate) and giving delight (providing an enjoyable taste of the mental states that the words depict), the best translation is one that plays with that tension without submitting totally to one side at the expense of the other.

To convey the savor of the work, I have aimed at a spare style flexible enough to express not only its dominant emotions—energy and astonishment—but also its transient emotions, such as humor, delight, and fear. Although the original verses conform to metrical rules, the translations are in free verse. This is the form that requires the fewest deviations from literal accuracy and allows for a terse directness that conforms with the heroic savor of the original. The freedom I have used in placing words on the page also allows many of the poetic effects of Pali syntax—especially the parallelism and ellipsis of the "lamps"—to shine through.

I have been relatively consistent in choosing English equivalents for Pali terms, especially where the terms have a technical meaning. Total consistency, although it may be a logical goal, is by no means a rational one, especially in translating poetry. Anyone who is truly bilingual will appreciate this point. Words in the original were chosen for their sound and connotations, as well as their literal sense, so the same principles—within reasonable

limits—have been used in the translation. Deviations from the original syntax are rare, and have been limited primarily to six sorts. The first four are for the sake of immediacy: occasional use of the American "you" for "one"; occasional use of imperatives ("Do this!") for optatives ("One should do this"); substituting active for passive voice; and replacing "he who does this" with "he does this" in many of the verses defining the true brahman in Chapter 26. The remaining two deviations are: making minor adjustments in sentence structure to keep a word at the beginning or end of a verse when this position seems important (e.g., 158, 384); and changing the number from singular ("the wise person") to plural ("the wise") when talking about personality types, both to streamline the language and to lighten the gender bias of the original Pali. (As most of the verses were originally addressed to monks, I have found it impossible to eliminate the gender bias entirely, and so apologize for whatever bias remains.)

In verses where I sense that a particular Pali word or phrase is meant to carry multiple meanings, I have explicitly given all of those meanings in the English, even where this has meant a considerable expansion of the verse. (Many of these verses are discussed in the notes.) Otherwise, I have tried to make the translation as transparent as possible, in order to allow the light and energy of the original to pass through with minimal distortion.

The Dhammapada has for centuries been used as an introduction to the Buddhist point of view. However,

the text is by no means elementary, either in terms of content or style. Many of the verses presuppose at least a passing knowledge of Buddhist doctrine; others employ multiple levels of meaning and wordplay typical of polished kavya. For this reason, I have added notes to the translation to help draw out some of the implications of verses that might not be obvious to people who are new to either of the two traditions that the text represents.

I hope that whatever delight you gain from this translation will inspire you to put the Buddha's words into practice, so that you will someday taste the savor, not just of the words, but of the Deathless to which they point.

1 : Pairs

Phenomena are preceded by the heart,
ruled by the heart,
made of the heart.
If you speak or act
with a corrupted heart,
then suffering follows you—
as the wheel of the cart,
the track of the ox
that pulls it.

Phenomena are preceded by the heart,
ruled by the heart,
made of the heart.
If you speak or act
with a calm, bright heart,
then happiness follows you,
like a shadow
that never leaves.

1-2*

'He insulted me,
hit me,
beat me,
robbed me'
—for those who brood on this,
hostility isn't stilled.

'He insulted me,
hit me,
beat me,
robbed me'—
for those who don't brood on this,
    hostility is stilled.

Hostilities aren't stilled
through hostility,
    regardless.
Hostilities are stilled
through non-hostility:
    this, an unending truth.

Unlike those who don't realize
that we're here on the verge
    of perishing,
those who do:
    their quarrels are stilled.

3-6

One who stays focused on the beautiful,
is unrestrained with the senses,
knowing no moderation in food,
apathetic, unenergetic:
    Mara overcomes him
    as the wind, a weak tree.

One who stays focused on the foul,
is restrained with regard to the senses,
knowing moderation in food,
full of conviction & energy:
Mara does not overcome him
as the wind, a mountain of rock.

7-8*

He who, depraved,
devoid
of truthfulness
& self-control,
puts on the ochre robe,
doesn't deserve the ochre robe.

But he who is free
of depravity
endowed
with truthfulness
& self-control,
well-established
in the precepts,
truly deserves the ochre robe.

9-10

Those who regard
non-essence as essence
and see essence as non-,
don't get to the essence,
ranging about in wrong resolves.

But those who know
essence as essence,
and non-essence as non-,
get to the essence,
ranging about in right resolves.

11-12*

As rain seeps into
an ill-thatched hut,
so passion,
the undeveloped mind.

As rain doesn't seep into
a well-thatched hut,
so passion does not,
the well-developed mind.

13-14

Here he grieves
he grieves hereafter.
In both worlds
the wrong-doer grieves.
He grieves, he's afflicted,
seeing the corruption
of his deeds.

Here he rejoices
he rejoices hereafter.
In both worlds
the merit-maker rejoices.
He rejoices, is jubilant,
seeing the purity
of his deeds.

Here he's tormented
he's tormented hereafter.
In both worlds
the wrong-doer's tormented.
He's tormented at the thought,
'I've done wrong.'
Having gone to a bad destination,
he's tormented
all the more.

Here he delights
he delights hereafter.
In both worlds
the merit-maker delights.
He delights at the thought,
'I've made merit.'
Having gone to a good destination,
he delights
all the more.

15-18*

If he recites many teachings, but
—heedless man—
doesn't do what they say,
like a cowherd counting the cattle of
others,
he has no share in the contemplative life.

If he recites next to nothing
but follows the Dhamma
in line with the Dhamma;
    abandoning passion,
        aversion, delusion;
    alert,
    his mind well-released,
        not clinging
    either here or hereafter:
he has his share in the contemplative life.

19-20

II : Heedfulness

Heedfulness: the path to the Deathless.
Heedlessness: the path to death.
The heedful do not die.
The heedless are as if
already dead.

Knowing this as a true distinction,
those wise in heedfulness
rejoice in heedfulness,
enjoying the range of the noble ones.

The enlightened, constantly
absorbed in jhana,
persevering,
firm in their effort:
they touch Unbinding,
the unexcelled safety from bondage.

Those with initiative,
mindful,
clean in action,
acting with due consideration,
heedful, restrained,
living the Dhamma:
their glory
grows.

21-24*

Through initiative, heedfulness,
restraint, & self-control,
the wise would make
an island
no flood
can submerge.

25

They're addicted to heedlessness
—dullards, fools—
while one who is wise
cherishes heedfulness
as his highest wealth.

26

Don't give way to heedlessness
or to intimacy
with sensual delight—
for a heedful person,
absorbed in jhana,
attains an abundance of ease.

27

When the wise person drives out
heedlessness
with heedfulness,
having climbed the high tower
of discernment,
sorrow-free,
he observes the sorrowing crowd—

as the enlightened man,
having scaled
a summit,
the fools on the ground below.

28

Heedful among the heedless,
wakeful among those asleep,
just as a fast horse advances,
leaving the weak behind:
so the wise.

29

Through heedfulness, Indra won
to lordship over the gods.
Heedfulness is praised,
heedlessness censured—
always.

30

The monk delighting in heedfulness,
seeing danger in heedlessness,
advances like a fire,
burning fetters
great & small.

The monk delighting in heedfulness,
seeing danger in heedlessness
—incapable of falling back—
stands right on the verge
of Unbinding.

31-32

III : The Mind

Quivering, wavering,
hard to guard,
to hold in check:
    the mind.
The sage makes it straight—
like a fletcher,
the shaft of an arrow.

Like a fish
pulled from its home in the water
& thrown on land:
this mind flips & flaps about
    to escape Mara's sway.

Hard to hold down,
    nimble,
alighting wherever it likes:
    the mind.
Its taming is good.
The mind well-tamed
            brings ease.

So hard to see,
so very, very subtle,
alighting wherever it likes:
    the mind.
The wise should guard it.

The mind protected
brings ease.

Wandering far,
going alone,
bodiless,
lying in a cave:
the mind.
Those who restrain it:
from Mara's bonds
they'll be freed.

33-37*

For a person of unsteady mind,
not knowing true Dhamma,
serenity
set adrift:
discernment doesn't grow full.

38

For a person of unsoddened mind,
unassaulted awareness,
abandoning merit & evil,
wakeful,
there is no danger
no fear.

39*

Knowing this body
is like a clay jar,
securing this mind
like a fort,
attack Mara
with the spear of discernment,
then guard what's won
without settling there,
without laying claim.

40*

All too soon, this body
will lie on the ground
cast off,
bereft of consciousness,
like a useless scrap
of wood.

41

Whatever an enemy might do
to an enemy,
or a foe to a foe,
the ill-directed mind
can do to you
even worse.

Whatever a mother, father
or other kinsman
might do for you,
the well-directed mind
can do for you
even better.

42-43*

IV : Blossoms

Who will penetrate this earth
& this realm of death
with all its gods?
Who will ferret out
the well-taught Dhamma-saying,
as the skillful flower-arranger
the flower?

The learner-on-the-path
will penetrate this earth
& this realm of death
with all its gods.
The learner-on-the-path
will ferret out
the well-taught Dhamma-saying,
as the skillful flower-arranger
the flower.

44-45*

Knowing this body
is like foam,
realizing its nature
—a mirage—
cutting out
the blossoms of Mara,

you go where the King of Death
can't see.

46

The man immersed in
gathering blossoms,
his heart distracted:
death sweeps him away—
as a great flood,
a village asleep.

The man immersed in
gathering blossoms,
his heart distracted,
insatiable in sensual pleasures:
the End-Maker holds him
under his sway.

47-48*

As a bee—without harming
the blossom,
its color,
its fragrance—
takes its nectar & flies away:
so should the sage
go through a village.

49

Focus,
not on the rudenesses of others,
not on what they've done
or left undone,
but on what you
have & haven't done
yourself.

50

Just like a blossom,
bright colored
but scentless:
a well-spoken word
is fruitless
when not carried out.

Just like a blossom,
bright colored
& full of scent:
a well-spoken word
is fruitful
when well carried out.

51-52

Just as from a heap of flowers
many garland strands can be made,
even so
one born & mortal
should do
—with what's born & is mortal—
many a skillful thing.

53*

No flower's scent
goes against the wind—
                    not sandalwood,
                              jasmine,
                                tagara.
But the scent of the good
does go against the wind.
The person of integrity
wafts a scent
in every direction.

Sandalwood, tagara,
lotus, & jasmine:
among these scents,
the scent of virtue
is unsurpassed.

Next to nothing, this fragrance
—sandalwood, tagara—
while the scent of the virtuous
wafts to the gods,
    supreme.

54-56*

Those consummate in virtue,
dwelling   in heedfulness,
released   through right knowing:
Mara can't follow their tracks.

57*

As in a pile of rubbish
cast by the side of a highway
            a lotus might grow
    clean-smelling
    pleasing the heart,
so in the midst of the rubbish-like,
people run-of-the-mill & blind,
    there dazzles with discernment
    the disciple of the Rightly
    Self-Awakened One.

58-59

V : Fools

Long for the wakeful is the night.
Long for the weary, a league.
For fools
unaware of True Dhamma,
samsara
is long.

60

If, in your course, you don't meet
your equal, your better,
then continue your course,
firmly,
alone.
There's no fellowship with fools.

61

'I have sons, I have wealth'—
the fool torments himself.
When even he himself
doesn't belong to himself,
how then sons?
How wealth?

62

A fool with a sense of his foolishness
is—at least to that extent—wise.
But a fool who thinks himself wise
really deserves to be called
    a fool.

63

Even if for a lifetime
the fool stays with the wise,
he knows nothing of the Dhamma—
    as the ladle,
    the taste of the soup.

Even if for a moment,
the perceptive person stays with the wise,
he immediately knows the Dhamma—
    as the tongue,
    the taste of the soup.

64-65

Fools, their wisdom weak,
are their own enemies
as they go through life,
doing evil
that bears
    bitter fruit.

66

It's not good,
the doing of the deed
that, once it's done,
you regret,
whose result you reap crying,
your face in tears.

It's good,
the doing of the deed
that, once it's done,
you don't regret,
whose result you reap gratified,
happy at heart.

67-68

As long as evil has yet to ripen,
the fool mistakes it for honey.
But when that evil ripens,
the fool falls into
pain.

69

Month after month
the fool might eat
only a tip-of-grass measure of food,
but he wouldn't be worth
one sixteenth
of those who've fathomed
the Dhamma.

70

An evil deed, when done,
doesn't—like ready milk—
come out right away.
It follows the fool,
smoldering
like a fire
hidden in ashes.

71*

Only for his ruin
does renown come to the fool.
It ravages his bright fortune
& rips his head apart.

He would want unwarranted status,
preeminence among monks,
authority among monasteries,
homage from lay families.

'Let householders & those gone forth
both think that this
was done by me alone.
May I alone determine
what's a duty, what's not':
the resolve of a fool
as they grow—
his desire & pride.

72-74

The path to material gain
goes one way,
the way to Unbinding,
another.
Realizing this, the monk,
a disciple to the Awakened One,
should not relish offerings,
should cultivate seclusion
instead.
75

VI : The Wise

Regard him as one who
points out
treasure,
the wise one who
seeing your faults
rebukes you.

Stay with this sort of sage.
For the one who stays
with a sage of this sort,
things get better,
not worse.

Let him admonish, instruct,
deflect you
away from poor manners.
To the good, he's endearing;
to the bad, he's not.

76-77

Don't associate with bad friends.
Don't associate with the low.
Associate with admirable friends.
Associate with the best.

78

Drinking the Dhamma,
refreshed by the Dhamma,
one sleeps at ease
with clear awareness & calm.
In the Dhamma revealed
by the noble ones,
the wise person
    always delights.

79*

Irrigators guide the water.
Fletchers shape the arrow shaft.
Carpenters shape the wood.
The wise control
    themselves.

80

As a single slab of rock
won't budge in the wind,
so the wise are not moved
    by praise,
    by blame.

81

Like a deep lake,
clear, unruffled, & calm:
so the wise become clear,
    calm,
on hearing words of the Dhamma.

82

Everywhere, truly,
those of integrity
stand apart.
They, the good,
don't chatter in hopes
of favor or gains.
When touched
now by pleasure,
now pain,
the wise give no sign
of high
or low.
83*

One who wouldn't—
not for his own sake
nor that of another—
hanker for
wealth,
a son,
a kingdom,
his own fulfillment,
by unrighteous means:
he is righteous, rich
in virtue,
discernment.
84

Few are the people
who reach the Far Shore.
    These others
    simply scurry along
    this shore.
But those who practice Dhamma
in line with the well-taught Dhamma,
will cross over the realm of Death
so hard to transcend.

Forsaking dark practices,
    the wise person
should develop the bright,
having gone from home
    to no-home
in seclusion, so hard to enjoy.
There he should wish for delight,
discarding sensuality—
    he who has nothing.
He should cleanse himself—wise—
of what defiles the mind.

Whose minds are well-developed
in the factors for self-awakening,
who delight in non-clinging,
relinquishing grasping—
    resplendent,
    their effluents ended:
    they, in the world,
    are Unbound.

85-89*

VII : Arahants

In one who
has gone the full distance,
is free from sorrow,
is fully released
in all respects,
has abandoned all bonds:
no fever is found.

90

The mindful keep active,
don't delight in settling back.
They renounce every home,
every home,
like swans taking off from a lake.

91

Not hoarding,
having understood food,
their pasture—emptiness
& freedom without sign:
their trail,
like that of birds through space,
can't be traced.

Effluents ended,
independent of nutriment,
their pasture—emptiness
& freedom without sign:
their trail,
like that of birds through space,
can't be traced.

92-93*

He whose senses are steadied
like stallions
well-trained by the charioteer,
his conceit abandoned,
free of effluent,
Such:
even devas adore him.

Like the earth, he doesn't react—
cultured,
Such,
like Indra's pillar,
like a lake free of mud.
For him
—Such—
there's no traveling on.

Calm is his mind,
calm his speech & his deed:
one who's released through right knowing,
pacified,
Such.

94-96*

The man
faithless / beyond conviction
ungrateful / knowing the Unmade
a burglar / who has severed connections
who's destroyed
his chances / conditions
who eats vomit: / has disgorged expectations:
the ultimate person.

97*

In village or wilds,
valley, plateau:
that place is delightful
where arahants dwell.

98

Delightful wilds
where the crowds don't delight,
those free from passion
delight,
for they're not searching
for sensual pleasures.

99

VIII : Thousands

Better
than if there were thousands
of meaningless words is
one
meaningful
word
that on hearing
brings peace.

Better
than if there were thousands
of meaningless verses is
one
meaningful
verse
that on hearing
brings peace.

And better than chanting hundreds
of meaningless verses is
one
Dhamma-saying
that on hearing
brings peace.

100-102*

Greater in battle
than the man who would conquer
a thousand-thousand men,
is he who would conquer
just one—
            himself.

Better to conquer yourself
    than others.
When you've trained yourself,
living in constant self-control,
neither a deva nor gandhabba,
nor a Mara banded with Brahmas,
could turn that triumph
back into defeat.

103-105

You could, month by month,
    at a cost of thousands,
conduct sacrifices
    a hundred times,
            or
pay a single moment's homage
    to one person,
    self-cultivated.
Better than a hundred years of sacrifices
would that act of homage be.

You could, for a hundred years,
live in a forest
tending a fire,
or
pay a single moment's homage
to one person,
self-cultivated.
Better than a hundred years of sacrifices
would that act of homage be.

Everything offered
or sacrificed in the world
for an entire year by one seeking merit
doesn't come to a fourth.
Better to pay respect
to those who've gone
the straight way.

106-108*

If you're respectful by habit,
constantly honoring the worthy,
four things increase:
long life, beauty,
happiness, strength.

109

Better than a hundred years
lived without virtue, uncentered, is
one day
lived by a virtuous person
absorbed in jhana.

And better than a hundred years
lived undiscerning, uncentered, is
    one day
lived by a discerning person
absorbed in jhana.

And better than a hundred years
lived apathetic & unenergetic, is
    one day
lived energetic & firm.

And better than a hundred years
lived without seeing
arising & passing away, is
    one day
lived seeing
arising & passing away.

And better than a hundred years
lived without seeing
the Deathless state, is
    one day
lived seeing
the Deathless state.

And better than a hundred years
lived without seeing
the ultimate Dhamma, is
    one day
lived seeing
the ultimate Dhamma.

110-115

IX : Evil

Be quick in doing
what's admirable.
Restrain your mind
from what's evil.
When you're slow
in making merit,
evil delights the mind.

116

If a person does evil,
he shouldn't do it again & again,
shouldn't develop a penchant for it.
To accumulate evil
    brings pain.

If a person makes merit,
he should do it again & again,
should develop a penchant for it.
To accumulate merit
    brings ease.

117-118

Even the evil
meet with good fortune
as long as their evil
has yet to mature.
But when it's matured
that's when they meet
with evil.

Even the good
meet with bad fortune
as long as their good
has yet to mature.
But when it's matured
that's when they meet
with good fortune.

119-120

Don't be heedless of evil
('It won't come to *me*').
A water jar fills,
even with water
falling in drops.
With evil—even if
bit
by
bit,
habitually—
the fool fills himself full.

Don't be heedless of merit
('It won't come to *me*').
A water jar fills,
even with water
falling in drops.
With merit—even if
bit
by
bit,
habitually—
the enlightened one fills himself full.

121-122*

Like a merchant with a small
but well-laden caravan
—a dangerous road,
like a person who loves life
—a poison,
one should avoid
—evil deeds.

123

If there's no wound on the hand,
that hand can hold poison.
Poison won't penetrate
where there's no wound.
There's no evil
for those who don't do it.

124

Whoever harasses
an innocent man,
a man pure, without blemish:
the evil comes right back to the fool
like fine dust
thrown against the wind.

125

Some are born in the human womb,
evildoers in hell,
those on the good course go
to heaven,
while those without effluent:
totally unbound.

126*

Not up in the air,
nor in the middle of the sea,
nor going into a cleft in the mountains
—nowhere on earth—
is a spot to be found
where you could stay & escape
your evil deed.

Not up in the air,
nor in the middle of the sea,
nor going into a cleft in the mountains
—nowhere on earth—
is a spot to be found
where you could stay & not succumb
to death.

127-128

x : The Rod

All
tremble at the rod,
all
are fearful of death.
Drawing the parallel to
yourself,
neither kill nor get others to kill.

All
tremble at the rod,
all
hold their life dear.
Drawing the parallel to
yourself,
neither kill nor get others to kill.

129-130

Whoever takes a rod
to harm living beings desiring ease,
when he himself is looking for ease,
meets with no ease after death.

Whoever doesn't take a rod
to harm living beings desiring ease,
when he himself is looking for ease,
meets with ease after death.

131-132

Speak harshly to no one,
or the words will be thrown
    right back at you.
Contentious talk is painful,
for you get struck by rods in return.

133

If, like a flattened metal pot
you don't resound,
you've attained an Unbinding;
in you there's found
no contention.

134

As a cowherd with a rod
drives cows to the field,
so aging & death
drive the life
of living beings.

135

When doing evil deeds,
the fool is oblivious.
The dullard
is tormented
by his own deeds,
as if burned by a fire.

136

Whoever, with a rod,
harasses an innocent man, unarmed,
quickly falls into any of ten things:

harsh pains, devastation, a broken body, grave illness, mental derangement, trouble with the government, violent slander, relatives lost, property dissolved, houses burned down.

At the break-up of the body
this one with no discernment,
reappears in
hell.

137-140

Neither nakedness nor matted hair
nor mud nor the refusal of food
nor sleeping on the bare ground
nor dust & dirt nor squatting austerities
cleanses the mortal
who's not gone beyond doubt.

If, though adorned, one lives in tune
with the chaste life
—calmed, tamed, & assured—
having put down the rod toward all beings,
he's a contemplative
a brahman
a monk.

141-142

Who in the world
is a man constrained by conscience,
who awakens to censure
like a fine stallion to the whip?

143*

Like a fine stallion
struck with a whip,
be ardent & chastened.
Through conviction
virtue, persistence,
concentration, judgment,
consummate in knowledge & conduct,
mindful,
you'll abandon this not-insignificant pain.

144

Irrigators guide the water.
Fletchers shape the arrow shaft.
Carpenters shape the wood.
Those of good practices control
themselves.

145

xi : Aging

What laughter, why joy,
when constantly aflame?
Enveloped in darkness,
don't you look for a lamp?

146

Look at the beautified image,
a heap of festering wounds, shored up:
ill, but the object
　　　　of many resolves,
where there is nothing
　　　　lasting or sure.

147

Worn out is this body,
a nest of diseases, dissolving.
This putrid conglomeration
is bound to break up,
for life is hemmed in with death.

148

On seeing these bones
　　discarded
like gourds in the fall,
　　pigeon-gray:
　　　　what delight?

149

A city made of bones,
plastered over with flesh & blood,
whose hidden treasures are:
pride & contempt,
aging & death.

150

Even royal chariots
well-embellished
get run down,
and so does the body
succumb to old age.
But the Dhamma of the good
doesn't succumb to old age:
the good let the civilized know.

151

This unlistening man
matures like an ox.
His muscles develop,
his discernment not.

152*

Through the round of many births I roamed
without reward,
without rest,
seeking the house-builder.
Painful is birth again
& again.

House-builder, you're seen!
You will not build a house again.
All your rafters broken,
the ridge pole destroyed,
gone to the Unformed, the mind
has come to the end of craving.

153-154*

Neither living the chaste life
nor gaining wealth in their youth,
they waste away like old herons
in a dried-up lake
depleted of fish.

Neither living the chaste life
nor gaining wealth in their youth,
they lie around,
misfired from the bow,
sighing over old times.

155-156

XII : Self

If you hold yourself dear
then guard, guard yourself well.
The wise person would stay awake
nursing himself
in any of the three watches of the night,
the three stages of life.

157*

First
he'd settle himself
in what is correct,
only then
teach others.
He wouldn't stain his name
: he is wise.

158

If you'd mold yourself
the way you teach others,
then, well-trained,
go ahead & tame—
for, as they say,
what's hard to tame is you
yourself.

159

Your own self is
your own mainstay,
for who else could your mainstay be?
With you yourself well-trained
you obtain the mainstay
hard to obtain.

160

The evil he himself has done
—self-born, self-created—
grinds down the dullard,
as a diamond, a precious stone.

161

When overspread by extreme vice—
like a sal tree by a vine—
you do to yourself
what an enemy would wish.

162*

They're easy to do—
things of no good
& no use to yourself.
What's truly useful & good
is truly harder than hard to do.

163

The teaching of those
who live the Dhamma,
worthy ones, noble:
whoever maligns it
—a dullard
inspired by evil view—
bears fruit for his own destruction,
like the fruiting of the bamboo.

164*

Evil is done by oneself
by oneself is one defiled.
Evil is left undone by oneself
by oneself is one cleansed.
Purity & impurity are one's own doing.
No one purifies another.
No other purifies one.

165*

Don't sacrifice your own welfare
for that of another,
no matter how great.
Realizing your own true welfare,
be intent on just that.

166*

XIII : Worlds

Don't associate with lowly qualities.
Don't consort with heedlessness.
Don't associate with wrong views.
Don't busy yourself with the world.

167

Get up! Don't be heedless.
Live the Dhamma well.
One who lives the Dhamma
    sleeps with ease
in this world & the next.

Live the Dhamma well.
Don't live it badly.
One who lives the Dhamma
    sleeps with ease
in this world & the next.

168-169

See it   as a bubble,
see it   as a mirage:
one who regards the world this way
the King of Death doesn't see.

170*

Come, look at this world
all decked out
like a royal chariot,
where fools plunge in,
while those who know
don't cling.
171

Who once was heedless,
but later is not,
brightens the world
like the moon set free from a cloud.

His evil-done deed
is replaced with skillfulness:
he brightens the world
like the moon set free from a cloud.
172-173

Blinded this world—
how few here see clearly!
Just as birds who've escaped
from a net are
few, few
are the people
who make it to heaven.
174

Swans fly the path of the sun;
those with the power fly through space;
the enlightened flee from the world,
having defeated the armies of Mara.

175

The person who tells a lie,
who transgresses in this one thing,
transcending concern for the world beyond:
there's no evil
he might not do.

176*

No misers go
to the world of the devas.
Those who don't praise giving
are fools.
The enlightened
express their approval for giving
and so find ease
in the world beyond.

177

Sole dominion over the earth,
going to heaven,
lordship over all worlds:
the fruit of Stream-entry
excels them.

178*

XIV : Awakened

Whose conquest
    can't be undone,
whose conquest
    no one in the world
        can reach;
awakened, his pasture endless,
        pathless:
by what path will you lead him astray?

In whom there's no craving
—the sticky ensnarer—
to lead him anywherever at all;
awakened, his pasture endless,
        pathless:
by what path will you lead him astray?

179-180

They, the enlightened, intent on jhana,
delighting in stilling
& renunciation,
self-awakened & mindful:
    even the devas
    view them with envy.

181

Hard the winning of a human birth.
Hard the life of mortals.
Hard the chance to hear the true Dhamma.
Hard the arising of Awakened Ones.

182

The non-doing of any evil,
the performance of what's skillful,
the cleansing of one's own mind:
this is the teaching
of the Awakened.

Patient endurance:
the foremost austerity.
Unbinding:
the foremost,
so say the Awakened.
He who injures another
is no contemplative.
He who mistreats another,
no monk.

Not disparaging, not injuring,
restraint in line with the Patimokkha,
moderation in food,
dwelling in seclusion,
commitment to the heightened mind:
this is the teaching
of the Awakened.

183-185*

Not even if it rained gold coins
would we have our fill
of sensual pleasures.
'Stressful,
they give little enjoyment'—
knowing this, the wise one
finds no delight
even in heavenly sensual pleasures.
He is one who delights
in the ending of craving,
a disciple of the Rightly
Self-Awakened One.

186-187

They go to many a refuge,
to mountains & forests,
to park & tree shrines:
people threatened with danger.
That's not the secure refuge,
not the supreme refuge,
that's not the refuge,
having gone to which,
you gain release
from all suffering & stress.

But when, having gone
to the Buddha, Dhamma,
& Sangha for refuge,
you see with right discernment
the four noble truths—

stress,
the cause of stress,
the transcending of stress,
& the noble eightfold path,
the way to the stilling of stress:
that's the secure refuge,
that, the supreme refuge,
that is the refuge,
having gone to which,
you gain release
from all suffering & stress.

188-192*

It's hard to come by
a thoroughbred of a man.
It's simply not true
that he's born everywhere.
Wherever he's born, an enlightened one,
the family prospers,
is happy.

193

A blessing: the arising of Awakened Ones.
A blessing: the teaching of true Dhamma.
A blessing: the concord of the Sangha.
The austerity of those in concord
is a blessing.

194

If you worship those worthy of worship,
—Awakened Ones or their disciples—
who've transcended
    complications,
    lamentation,
    & grief,
who are unendangered,
    fearless,
    unbound:
there's no measure for reckoning
that your merit's 'this much.'

195-196

XV : Happy

How very happily we live,
free from hostility
among those who are hostile.
Among hostile people,
free from hostility we dwell.

How very happily we live,
free from misery
among those who are miserable.
Among miserable people,
free from misery we dwell.

How very happily we live,
free from busyness
among those who are busy.
Among busy people,
free from busyness we dwell.

How very happily we live,
we who have nothing.
We will feed on rapture
like the Radiant gods.

197-200

Winning gives birth to hostility.
Losing, one lies down in pain.
The calmed lie down with ease,
having set
winning & losing
aside.

201

There's no fire like passion,
no loss like anger,
no pain like the aggregates,
no ease other than peace.

Hunger: the foremost illness.
Fabrications: the foremost pain.
For one knowing this truth
as it actually is,
Unbinding
is the foremost ease.

Freedom from illness: the foremost good fortune.
Contentment: the foremost wealth.
Trust: the foremost kinship.
Unbinding: the foremost ease.

202-204

Drinking the nourishment,
the flavor,
of seclusion & calm,
one is freed from evil, devoid
of distress,

refreshed with the nourishment
of rapture in the Dhamma.

205

It's good to see Noble Ones.
Happy their company—always.
Through not seeing fools
constantly, constantly
one would be happy.

For, living with a fool,
one grieves a long time.
Painful is communion with fools,
as with an enemy—
always.
Happy is communion
with the enlightened,
as with a gathering of kin.

So:
the enlightened man—
discerning, learned,
enduring, dutiful, noble,
intelligent, a man of integrity:
follow him
—one of this sort—
as the moon, the path
of the zodiac stars.

206-208

XVI : Dear Ones

Having applied himself
to what was not his own task,
and not having applied himself
to what was,
having disregarded the goal
to grasp at what he held dear,
he now envies those
who kept after themselves,
took themselves
to task.

209*

Don't ever—regardless—
be conjoined with what's dear
or undear.
It's painful
not to see what's dear
or to see what's not.

So don't make anything dear,
for it's dreadful to be far
from what's dear.
No bonds are found
for those for whom
there's neither dear
nor undear.

210-211

From what's dear is born grief,
from what's dear is born fear.
For one freed from what's dear
there's no grief
—so how fear?

From what's loved is born grief,
from what's loved is born fear.
For one freed from what's loved
there's no grief
—so how fear?

From delight is born grief,
from delight is born fear.
For one freed from delight
there's no grief
—so how fear?

From sensuality is born grief,
from sensuality is born fear.
For one freed from sensuality
there's no grief
—so how fear?

From craving is born grief,
from craving is born fear.
For one freed from craving
there's no grief
—so how fear?

212-216

One consummate
in virtue & vision,
judicious,
speaking the truth,
doing his own task:
the world holds him dear.

217

If
you've given birth to a wish
for what can't be expressed,
are suffused with heart,
your mind not enmeshed
in sensual passions:
you're said to be
in the up-flowing stream.

218*

A man long absent
comes home safe from afar.
His kin, his friends, his companions,
delight in his return.

In just the same way,
when you've done good
& gone from this world
to the world beyond,
your good deeds receive you—
as kin, someone dear
come home.

219-220

XVII : Anger

Abandon anger,
be done with conceit,
get beyond every fetter.
When for name & form
you have no attachment
—have nothing at all—
no sufferings, no stresses, invade.

221

When anger arises,
whoever keeps firm control
as if with a racing chariot:
him
I call a master charioteer.
Anyone else,
a rein-holder—
that's all.

222

Conquer anger
with lack of anger;
bad, with good;
stinginess, with generosity;
a liar, with truth.

223

By telling the truth;
by not growing angry;
by giving, when asked,
no matter how little you have:
by these three things
you enter the presence of devas.

224

Gentle sages,
constantly restrained in body,
go to the unwavering state
where, having gone,
there's no grief.

225

Those who always stay wakeful,
training by day & by night,
keen on Unbinding:
their effluents come to an end.

226

This has come down from old, Atula,
& not just from today:
they find fault with one
who sits silent,
they find fault with one
who speaks a great deal,
they find fault with one
who measures his words.
There's no one unfaulted in the world.

There never was,
will be,
nor at present is found
anyone entirely faulted
or entirely praised.

227-228

If knowledgeable people praise him,
having observed him
day after day
to be blameless in conduct, intelligent,
endowed with discernment & virtue:
like an ingot of gold—
who's fit to find fault with him?
Even devas praise him.
Even by Brahma he's praised.

229-230

Guard against anger
erupting in body;
in body, be restrained.
Having abandoned bodily misconduct,
live conducting yourself well
in body.

Guard against anger
erupting in speech;
in speech, be restrained.
Having abandoned verbal misconduct,
live conducting yourself well
in speech.

Guard against anger
erupting in mind;
in mind, be restrained.
Having abandoned mental misconduct,
live conducting yourself well
in mind.

Those restrained in body
—the enlightened—
restrained in speech & in mind
—enlightened—
are the ones whose restraint is secure.

231-234*

XVIII : Impurities

You are now
like a yellowed leaf.
Already
Yama's minions stand near.
You stand at the door to departure
but have yet to provide
for the journey.

Make an island for yourself!
Work quickly! Be wise!
With impurities all blown away,
unblemished,
you'll reach the divine realm
of the noble ones.

You are now
right at the end of your time.
You are headed
to Yama's presence,
with no place to rest along the way,
but have yet to provide
for the journey.

Make an island for yourself!
Work quickly! Be wise!

With impurities all blown away,
unblemished,
you won't again undergo birth
& aging.
235-238*

Just as a silver smith
step by
step,
bit by
bit,
moment to
moment,
blows away the impurities
of molten silver—
so the wise man, his own.
239

Just as rust
—iron's impurity—
eats the very iron
from which it is born,
so the deeds
of one who lives slovenly
lead him on
to a bad destination.
240*

No recitation: the ruinous impurity
of chants.
No initiative: of a household.
Indolence: of beauty.
Heedlessness: of a guard.

In a woman, misconduct is an impurity.
In a donor, stinginess.
Evil deeds are the real impurities
in this world & the next.

More impure than these impurities
is the ultimate impurity:
ignorance.
Having abandoned this impurity,
monks, you're impurity-free.

241-243

Life's easy to live
for someone unscrupulous,
cunning as a crow,
corrupt, back-biting,
forward, & brash;
but for someone who's constantly
scrupulous, cautious,
observant, sincere,
pure in his livelihood,
clean in his pursuits,
it's hard.

244-245

Whoever kills, lies, steals,
goes to someone else's wife,
& is addicted to intoxicants,
    digs himself up
    by the root
right here in this world.

So know, my good man,
that bad deeds are reckless.
Don't let greed & unrighteousness
oppress you with long-term pain.

246-248

People give
in line with their faith,
in line with conviction.
Whoever gets flustered
at food & drink given to others,
attains no concentration
by day or by night.

But one in whom this is
    cut   through
    up-   rooted
    wiped out
attains concentration
by day or by night.

249-250

There's no fire like passion,
no seizure like anger,
no snare like delusion,
no river like craving.

251

It's easy to see
the errors of others,
but hard to see
your own.
You winnow like chaff
the errors of others,
but conceal your own—
like a cheat, an unlucky throw.

If you focus on the errors of others,
constantly finding fault,
your effluents flourish.
You're far from their ending.

252-253

There's no trail in space,
no outside contemplative.
People are smitten
with complications,
but devoid of complication are
the Tathagatas.

There's no trail in space,
no outside contemplative,
no eternal fabrications,
no wavering in the Awakened.

254-255*

XIX : The Judge

To pass judgment hurriedly
doesn't mean you're a judge.
The wise one, considering both
the right judgment & wrong,
judges others impartially—
unhurriedly, in line with the Dhamma,
guarding the Dhamma,
guarded by Dhamma,
intelligent:
he's called a judge.

256-257*

Simply talking a lot
doesn't mean one is wise.
Whoever's secure—
no hostility,
fear—
is said to be wise.

Simply talking a lot
doesn't maintain the Dhamma.
Whoever
—although he's heard next to nothing—
sees Dhamma through his body,
is not heedless of Dhamma:
he's one who maintains the Dhamma.

258-259*

A head of gray hairs
doesn't mean one's an elder.
Advanced in years,
one's called an old fool.

But one in whom there is
  truth, restraint,
  rectitude, gentleness,
  self-control—
he's called an elder,
  his impurities disgorged,
    enlightened.

260-261

Not by suave conversation
or lotus-like coloring
does an envious, miserly cheat
become an exemplary man.

But one in whom this is
  cut through
  up- rooted
  wiped out—
he's called exemplary,
  his aversion disgorged,
    intelligent.

262-263

A shaven head
doesn't mean a contemplative.
The liar observing no duties,
filled with greed & desire:
    what kind of contemplative's he?

But whoever tunes out
the dissonance
of his evil qualities
—large or small—
in every way
by bringing evil to consonance:
    he's called a contemplative.

264-265*

Begging from others
doesn't mean one's a monk.
As long as one follows
householders' ways,
one is no monk at all.

But whoever puts aside
both merit & evil and,
living the chaste life,
    judiciously
goes through the world:
    he's called a monk.

266-267

Not by silence
does someone confused
& unknowing
turn into a sage.
But whoever—wise,
as if holding the scales,
taking the excellent—
rejects evil deeds:
he is a sage,
that's how he's a sage.
Whoever can weigh
both sides of the world:
that's how he's called
a sage.

268-269*

Not by harming life
does one become noble.
One is termed noble
for being gentle
to all living things.

270

Monk,
don't
on account of
your precepts & practices,
great erudition,
concentration attainments,
secluded dwelling,

or the thought, 'I touch
the renunciate ease
that run-of-the-mill people
don't know':
ever let yourself get complacent
when the ending of effluents
is still unattained.

271-272*

XX : The Path

Of paths, the eightfold is best.
Of truths, the four sayings.
Of qualities, dispassion.
Of two-footed beings,
the one with the eyes
to see.

273*

Just this
is the path
—there is no other—
to purify vision.
Follow it,
and that will be Mara's
bewilderment.

Following it,
you put an end
to suffering & stress.
I have taught you this path
having known—for your knowing—
the extraction of arrows.

It's for you to strive
ardently.
Tathagatas simply
point out the way.

Those who practice,
absorbed in jhana:
    from Mara's bonds
    they'll be freed.

274-276*

When you see with discernment,
'All fabrications are inconstant'—
you grow disenchanted with stress.
    This is the path   to purity.

When you see with discernment,
'All fabrications are stressful'—
you grow disenchanted with stress.
    This is the path   to purity.

When you see with discernment,
'All phenomena are not-self'—
you grow disenchanted with stress.
    This is the path
    to purity.

277-279

At the time for initiative
he takes no initiative.
Young, strong, but lethargic,
the resolves of his heart
    exhausted,
the lazy, lethargic one
loses the path
to discernment.

280

Guarded in speech,
well-restrained in mind,
do nothing unskillful
in body.
Purify
these three courses of action.
Bring to fruition
the path that seers have proclaimed.

281

From striving comes wisdom;
from not, wisdom's end.
Knowing these two courses
—to development,
decline—
conduct yourself
so that wisdom will grow.

282

Cut down
the forest of desire,
not the forest of trees.
From the forest of desire
come danger & fear.
Having cut down this forest
& its underbrush, monks,
be deforested.

For as long as the least
bit of underbrush
of a man for women
is not cleared away,
the heart is fixated
    like a suckling calf
    on its mother.

Crush
your sense of self-allure
    like an autumn lily
    in the hand.
Nurture only the path to peace
    —Unbinding—
as taught by the One Well Gone.

283-285*

'Here I'll stay for the rains.
Here, for the summer & winter.'
So imagines the fool,
unaware of obstructions.

That drunk-on-his-sons-&-cattle man,
all tangled up in the mind:
death sweeps him away—
    as a great flood,
    a village asleep.

286-287

There are no sons
to give shelter,
no father,
no family
for one seized by the Ender,
no shelter among kin.

Conscious
of this compelling reason,
the wise man, restrained by virtue,
should make the path pure
—right away—
that goes all the way to Unbinding.

288-289*

xxi : Miscellany

If, by forsaking
a limited ease,
he would see
an abundance of ease,
the enlightened man
would forsake
the limited ease
for the sake
of the abundant.

290

He wants his own ease
by giving others dis-ease.
Intertwined in the inter-
action of hostility,
from hostility
he's not set free.

291

In those who
reject what should,
& do what shouldn't be done
—heedless, insolent—
effluents grow.

But for those who
are well-applied, constantly,
to mindfulness immersed in the body;
don't indulge
in what shouldn't be done
& persist
in what should
—mindful, alert—
effluents come to an end.

292-293*

Having killed mother & father,
two warrior kings,
the kingdom & its dependency—
the brahman, untroubled, travels on.

Having killed mother & father,
two learned kings,
&, fifth, a tiger—
the brahman, untroubled, travels on.

294-295*

They awaken, always wide awake:
Gotama's disciples
whose mindfulness, both day & night,
is constantly immersed
in the Buddha.

They awaken, always wide awake:
    Gotama's disciples
whose mindfulness, both day & night,
is constantly immersed
    in the Dhamma.

They awaken, always wide awake:
    Gotama's disciples
whose mindfulness, both day & night,
is constantly immersed
    in the Sangha.

They awaken, always wide awake:
    Gotama's disciples
whose mindfulness, both day & night,
is constantly immersed
    in the body.

They awaken, always wide awake:
    Gotama's disciples
whose hearts delight, both day & night,
    in harmlessness.

They awaken, always wide awake:
    Gotama's disciples
whose hearts delight, both day & night,
    in developing the mind.

296-301*

Hard is the life gone forth,
hard to delight in.
Hard is the miserable
    householder's life.

It's painful to stay with dissonant people,
painful to travel the road.
So be neither traveler
nor pained.

302

The man of conviction
endowed with virtue,
glory, & wealth:
wherever he goes
he is honored.

303*

The good shine from afar
like the snowy Himalayas.
The bad don't appear
even when near,
like arrows shot into the night.

304

Sitting alone,
resting alone,
walking alone,
untiring.
Taming himself,
he'd delight alone—
alone in the forest.

305

xxii : Hell

He goes to hell,
the one who asserts
what didn't take place,
as does the one
who, having done,
says, 'I didn't.'
Both—low-acting people—
there become equal:
after death, in the world beyond.

306

An ochre robe tied 'round their necks,
many with evil qualities
—unrestrained, evil—
rearise, because of their evil acts,
    in hell.

Better to eat an iron ball
—glowing, aflame—
than that, unprincipled &
    unrestrained,
you should eat the alms of the country.

307-308

Four things befall the heedless man
who lies down with the wife of another:
  a wealth of demerit;
  a lack of good sleep;
  third, censure;
    fourth, hell.

A wealth of demerit, an evil destination,
& the brief delight of a
    fearful man with a
    fearful woman,
& the king inflicts a harsh punishment.

  So
no man should lie down
with the wife of another.

309-310

Just as sharp-bladed grass,
if wrongly held,
wounds the very hand that holds it—
the contemplative life, if wrongly grasped,
drags you down to hell.

Any slack act,
or defiled observance,
or fraudulent life of chastity
bears no great fruit.

If something's to be done,
then work at it firmly,
for a slack going-forth
kicks up all the more dust.

It's better to leave a misdeed
    undone.
A misdeed burns you afterward.
Better that a good deed be done
that, after you've done it,
won't make you burn.

311-314

Like a frontier fortress,
guarded inside & out,
    guard yourself.
Don't let the moment pass by.
Those for whom the moment is past
grieve, consigned to hell.

315

Ashamed of what's not shameful,
not ashamed of what is,
beings adopting wrong views
go to a bad destination.

Seeing danger where there is none,
& no danger where there is,
beings adopting wrong views
go to a bad destination.

Imagining error where there is none,
and seeing no error where there is,
beings adopting wrong views
go to a bad destination.

But knowing error as error,
and non-error as non-,
beings adopting right views
    go to a good
    destination.

316-319

XXIII : Elephants

I—like an elephant in battle,
enduring an arrow shot from a bow—
will endure a false accusation,
for the mass of people
have   no principles.

320

The tamed is the one
they take into assemblies.
The tamed is the one
the king mounts.
The tamed who endures
a false accusation
is, among human beings,
            the best.

321

Excellent are tamed mules,
    tamed thoroughbreds,
    tamed horses from Sindh.
Excellent, tamed tuskers,
    great elephants.
But even more excellent
are those   self-tamed.

For not by these mounts could you go
to the land unreached,
as the tamed one goes
by taming, well-taming, himself.

322-323

The tusker, Dhanapalaka,
deep in rut, is hard to control.
Bound, he won't eat a morsel:
the tusker misses
the elephant wood.

324*

When torpid & over-fed,
a sleepy-head lolling about
like a stout hog, fattened on fodder:
a dullard enters the womb
    over &
    over again.

325

Before, this mind went wandering
    however it pleased,
    wherever it wanted,
    by whatever way that it liked.
Today I will hold it aptly in check—
as one wielding a goad, an elephant in rut.

326

Delight in heedfulness.
Watch over your own mind.
Lift yourself up
from the hard-going way,
like a tusker sunk in the mud.

327

If you gain a mature companion—
a fellow traveler, right-living, enlightened—
overcoming all dangers
    go with him, gratified,
    mindful.

If you don't gain a mature companion—
a fellow traveler, right-living, enlightened—
        go alone
like a king renouncing his kingdom,
like the elephant in the Matanga wilds,
        his herd.

Going alone is better.
There's no companionship with a fool.
        Go alone,
doing no evil, at peace,
like the elephant in the Matanga wilds.

328-330*

A blessing: friends when the need arises.
A blessing: contentment with whatever there is.
Merit at the ending of life is a blessing.
A blessing: the abandoning of all suffering
& stress.

A blessing in the world:
reverence to your mother.
A blessing: reverence to your father as well.
A blessing in the world:
reverence to a contemplative.
A blessing: reverence for a brahman, too.

A blessing into old age is virtue.
A blessing: conviction established.
A blessing: discernment attained.
The non-doing of evil things is
a blessing.

331-333

xxiv : Craving

When a person lives heedlessly,
his craving grows like a creeping vine.
He runs now here
& now there,
as if looking for fruit:
a monkey in the forest.

334

If this sticky, uncouth craving
overcomes you in the world,
your sorrows grow like wild grass
after rain.

If, in the world, you overcome
this uncouth craving, hard to escape,
sorrows roll off you,
like water beads off
a lotus.

335-336

To all of you gathered here
I say: Good fortune.
Dig up craving
—as when seeking medicinal roots, wild grass—
by the root.

Don't let Mara cut you down
—as a raging river, a reed—
over & over again.

337*

If its root remains
undamaged & strong,
a tree, even if cut,
will grow back.
So too if latent craving
is not rooted out,
this suffering returns
    again
    &
    again.

338

He whose 36 streams,
flowing to what is appealing, are strong:
the currents—resolves based on passion—
carry him, of base views, away.

They flow every which way, the streams,
but the sprouted creeper stays
            in place.
Now, seeing that the creeper's arisen,
cut through its root
with discernment.

339-340*

Loosened & oiled
are the joys of a person.
People, bound by enticement,
looking for ease:
to birth & aging they go.

341*

Encircled with craving,
people hop 'round & around
like a rabbit caught in a snare.
Tied with fetters & bonds
they go on to suffering,
again & again, for long.

Encircled with craving,
people hop 'round & around
like a rabbit caught in a snare.
So a monk
should dispel craving,
should aspire to dispassion
for himself.

342-343*

Cleared of the underbrush
but obsessed with the forest,
set free from the forest,
right back to the forest he runs.
Come, see the person set free
who runs right back to the same old chains!

344

That's not a strong bond
—so say the enlightened—
the one made of iron, of wood, or of grass.
To be smitten, enthralled,
with jewels & ornaments,
longing for children & wives:
that's the strong bond,
—so say the enlightened—
one that's constraining,
elastic,
hard to untie.
But having cut it, they
—the enlightened—go forth,
free of longing, abandoning
sensual ease.

Those smitten with passion
fall back
into a self-made stream,
like a spider snared in its web.
But, having cut it,
the enlightened set forth,
free of longing, abandoning
all suffering & stress.

345-347*

Gone to the beyond of becoming,
you let go of *in front,*
let go of *behind,*
let go of *between.*

With a heart everywhere let-go,
you don't come again to birth
& aging.
348*

For a person
forced on by his thinking,
fierce in his passion,
focused on beauty,
craving grows all the more.
He's the one
who tightens the bond.

But one who delights
in the stilling of thinking,
always mindful
cultivating
a focus on the foul:
He's the one
who will make an end,
the one who will cut Mara's bond.
349-350*

Arrived at the finish,
unfrightened, unblemished, free
of craving, he has cut away
the arrows of becoming.
This physical heap is his last.

Free from craving,
ungrasping,

astute in expression,
knowing the combination of sounds—
which comes first & which after.
He's called a
    last-body
    greatly discerning
    great man.

351-352*

All-conquering,
all-knowing am I,
with regard to all things,
    unadhering.
All-abandoning,
released in the ending of craving:
having fully known on my own,
to whom should I point as my teacher?

353*

A gift of Dhamma conquers all gifts;
the taste of Dhamma, all tastes;
a delight in Dhamma, all delights;
the ending of craving, all suffering
& stress.

354*

Riches ruin the man
weak in discernment,
but not those who seek
    the beyond.

Through craving for riches
the man weak in discernment
ruins himself
as he would others. 355

Fields are spoiled by weeds;
people, by passion.
So what's given to those
free of passion
bears great fruit.

Fields are spoiled by weeds;
people, by aversion.
So what's given to those
free of aversion
bears great fruit.

Fields are spoiled by weeds;
people, by delusion.
So what's given to those
free of delusion
bears great fruit.

Fields are spoiled by weeds;
people, by longing.
So what's given to those
free of longing
bears great fruit. 356-359

XXV : Monks

Restraint with the eye is good,
good is restraint with the ear.
Restraint with the nose is good,
good is restraint with the tongue.
Restraint with the body is good,
good is restraint with speech.
Restraint with the heart is good,
good is restraint everywhere.
A monk everywhere restrained
is released from all suffering & stress.

360-361*

Hands restrained,
feet restrained
speech restrained,
    supremely restrained—
delighting in what is inward,
content, centered, alone:
he's what they call
    a monk.

362

A monk restrained in his speaking,
giving counsel unruffled,
declaring the message & meaning:
sweet is his speech.

363*

Dhamma his dwelling,
Dhamma his delight,
a monk pondering Dhamma,
calling Dhamma to mind,
does not fall away
from true Dhamma.

364

Gains:
don't treat your own with scorn,
don't go coveting those of others.
A monk who covets those of others
attains
no concentration.

Even if he gets next to nothing,
he doesn't treat his gains with scorn.
Living purely, untiring:
he's the one
that the devas praise.

365-366

For whom, in name & form
in every way,
there's no sense of *mine*,
& who doesn't grieve
for what's not:
he's deservedly called
a monk.

367

Dwelling in kindness, a monk
with faith in the Awakened One's teaching,
would attain the good state,
the peaceful state:
stilling-of-fabrications ease.

368*

Monk, bail out this boat.
It will take you lightly when bailed.
Having cut through passion, aversion,
you go from there to Unbinding.

369*

Cut through five,
let go of five,
& develop five above all.
A monk gone past five attachments
is said to have crossed the flood.

370*

Practice jhana, monk,
and don't be heedless.
Don't take your mind roaming
in sensual strands.
Don't swallow—heedless—
the ball of iron aflame.
Don't burn & complain: 'This is pain.'

371

There's no jhana
for one with no discernment,
no discernment
for one with no jhana.
But one with both jhana
& discernment:
he's on the verge
of Unbinding.

372

A monk with his mind at peace,
going into an empty dwelling,
clearly seeing the Dhamma aright:
his delight is more
than human.

However it is,
however it is he touches
the arising-&-passing of aggregates:
he gains rapture & joy:

that, for those who know it,
is deathless,
the Deathless.

373-374

Here the first things
for a discerning monk
are guarding the senses,
contentment,
restraint in line with the Patimokkha.
He should associate with admirable friends.
Living purely, untiring,
hospitable by habit,
skilled in his conduct,
gaining a manifold joy,
he will put an end
to suffering & stress.

375-376

Shed passion
& aversion, monks—
as a jasmine would,
its withered flowers.

377

Calmed in body,
calmed in speech,
well-centered & calm,
having disgorged the baits of the world,
a monk is called
thoroughly
calmed.

378

You yourself should reprove yourself,
should examine yourself.
As a self-guarded monk
with guarded self,
mindful, you dwell at ease.

379

Your own self is
your own mainstay.
Your own self is
your own guide.
Therefore you should
watch over yourself—
as a trader, a fine steed.

380

A monk with a manifold joy,
with faith in the Awakened One's teaching,
would attain the good state,
the peaceful state:
stilling-of-fabrications ease.

381*

A young monk who strives
in the Awakened One's teaching,
brightens the world
like the moon set free from a cloud.

382

XXVI : Brahmans

Having striven, brahman,
cut the stream.
Expel sensual passions.
Knowing the ending of fabrications,
brahman,
you know the Unmade.

383*

When the brahman has gone
to the beyond of two things,
then all his fetters
go to their end—
he who knows.

384*

One whose *beyond* or
not-beyond or
beyond-&-not-beyond
can't be found;
unshackled, carefree:
he's what I call
a brahman.

385*

Sitting silent, dustless,
absorbed in jhana,
his task done, effluents gone,
ultimate goal attained:
he's what I call
a brahman.

386

By day shines the sun;
by night, the moon;
in armor, the warrior;
in jhana, the brahman.
But all day & all night,
every day & every night,
the Awakened One shines
in splendor.

387

He's called a brahman
for having banished his evil,
a contemplative
for living in consonance,
one gone forth
for having forsaken
his own impurities.

388*

One should not strike a brahman,
nor should the brahman
let loose with his anger.
Shame on a brahman's killer.
More shame on the brahman
whose anger's let loose.

389*

Nothing's better for the brahman
than when the mind is held back
from what is endearing & not.
However his harmful-heartedness
wears away,
that's how stress
simply comes to rest.

390*

Whoever does no wrong
in body,
speech,
heart;
is restrained in these three ways:
he's what I call
a brahman.

391

The person from whom
you would learn the Dhamma
taught by the Rightly
Self-Awakened One:
you should honor him with respect—
as a brahman, the flame for a sacrifice.

392*

Not by matted hair,
by clan, or by birth,
is one a brahman.
Whoever has truth
& rectitude:
    he is a pure one,
    he, a brahman.

What's the use of your matted hair,
    you dullard?
What's the use of your deerskin cloak?
        The tangle's inside you.
        You comb the outside.

393-394*

Wearing cast-off rags
—his body lean & lined with veins—
absorbed in jhana,
alone in the forest:
    he's what I call
    a brahman.

395

I don't call one a brahman
for being born of a mother
or sprung from a womb.
He's called a 'bho-sayer'
if he has anything at all.
But someone with nothing,
who clings to no thing:
    he's what I call
    a brahman.

396*

Having cut every fetter,
he doesn't get ruffled.
Beyond attachment,
unshackled:
    he's what I call
    a brahman.

397

Having cut the strap & thong,
    cord & bridle,
having thrown off the bar,
    awakened:
    he's what I call
    a brahman.

398*

He endures—unangered—
insult, assault, & imprisonment.
His army is strength;
his strength, forbearance:
    he's what I call
    a brahman.

399

Free from anger,
duties observed,
principled, with no overbearing pride,
trained, a 'last-body':
    he's what I call
    a brahman.

400*

Like water on a lotus leaf,
a mustard seed on the tip of an awl,
he doesn't adhere to sensual pleasures:
he's what I call
a brahman.

401

He discerns right here,
for himself,
on his own,
his own
ending of stress.
Unshackled, his burden laid down:
he's what I call
a brahman.

402*

Wise, profound
in discernment, astute
as to what is the path
& what's not;
his ultimate goal attained:
he's what I call
a brahman.

403

Uncontaminated
by householders
& houseless ones alike;
living with no home,
with next to no wants:
he's what I call
a brahman.

404

Having put aside violence
against beings fearful or firm,
he neither kills nor
gets others to kill:
he's what I call
a brahman.

405

Unopposing among opposition,
unbound among the armed,
unclinging among those who cling:
he's what I call
a brahman.

406

His passion, aversion,
conceit, & contempt,
have fallen away—
like a mustard seed
from the tip of an awl:
he's what I call
a brahman.

407

He would say
what's non-grating,
instructive,
true—
abusing no one:
he's what I call
a brahman.
408

Here in the world
he takes nothing not-given
—long, short,
large, small,
attractive, not:
he's what I call
a brahman.
409

His longing for this
& for the next world
can't be found;
free from longing, unshackled:
he's what I call
a brahman.
410

His attachments,
his homes,
can't be found.
Through knowing,
he is unperplexed,
has attained the plunge
into Deathlessness:
he's what I call
a brahman.

411*

He has gone
beyond attachment here
for both merit & evil—
sorrowless, dustless, & pure:
he's what I call
a brahman.

412*

Spotless, pure, like the moon
—limpid & calm—
his delights, his becomings,
totally gone:
he's what I call
a brahman.

413

He has made his way past
this hard-going path
—samsara, delusion—
has crossed over,
has gone beyond,
is free   from want,
              from perplexity,
absorbed in jhana,
through no-clinging
Unbound:
    he's what I call
    a brahman.

414

Whoever, abandoning sensual passions here,
would go forth from home—
his sensual passions, becomings,
              totally gone:
    he's what I call
    a brahman.

Whoever, abandoning craving here,
would go forth from home—
his cravings, becomings,
              totally gone:
    he's what I call
    a brahman.

415-416

Having left behind
the human bond,
having made his way past
the divine,
from all bonds unshackled:
he's what I call
a brahman.

417

Having left behind
delight & displeasure,
cooled, with no acquisitions—
a hero who has conquered
all the world,
every world:
he's what I call
a brahman.

418

He knows in every way
beings' passing away,
and their re-
arising;
unattached, awakened,
well-gone:
he's what I call
a brahman.

419

He whose course they don't know
—devas, gandhabbas, & human beings—
his effluents ended, an arahant:
he's what I call
a brahman.

420

He who has nothing
—in front, behind, in between—
the one with nothing
who clings to no thing:
he's what I call
a brahman.

421*

A splendid bull, conqueror,
hero, great seer—
free from want,
awakened, washed:
he's what I call
a brahman.

422

He knows his former lives.
He sees heavens & states of woe,
has attained the ending of birth,
is a sage who has mastered full-knowing,
his mastery totally mastered:
he's what I call
a brahman.

423*

Historical Notes: The Text & the Translation

There are many versions of the Dhammapada now extant: several recensions of the Pali Dhammapada from Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka, and Thailand; two incomplete manuscripts of a Gandhari Dharmapada found in central Asia; and a manuscript of a Buddhist Hybrid-Sanskrit Dharmapada found in a library in Tibet, called the Patna Dharmapada because photographs of this manuscript are now kept in Patna, India. There is also a Chinese translation of the Dharmapada made in the third century C.E. from a Prakrit original, now no longer extant, similar to—but not identical with—the Pali Dhammapada. Parts of a Dharmapada text are included in the Mahavastu, a text belonging to the Lokottaravadin Mahasanghika school. In addition, there are Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese versions of a text called the Udanavarga, which is known in at least four recensions, all of them containing many verses in common with the Dhammapada/Dharmapada (Dhp) texts. To further complicate matters, there are Jain anthologies that contain verses clearly related to some of those found in these Buddhist anthologies as well.

Despite the many similarities among these texts, they contain enough discrepancies to have fueled a small

scholarly industry. The different recensions of the Pali Dhp contain so many variant readings that there isn't yet—even after more than a century of Western scholarship on the topic—a single edition covering them all. The discrepancies among the Pali and non-Pali versions are even greater. They arrange verses in different orders, each contains verses not found in the others, and among the verses in different versions that *are* related, the similarity in terms of imagery or message is sometimes fairly tenuous.

Fortunately for anyone looking to the Dhp for spiritual guidance, the differences among the various recensions—though many in number—range in importance from fairly minor to minor in the extreme. Allowing for a few obvious scribal errors, none of them fall outside the pale of what has long been accepted as standard early Buddhist doctrine as derived from the Pali discourses. For example, does the milk in verse 71 come out, or does it curdle? Is the bond in verse 346 subtle, slack, or elastic? Is the brahman in verse 393 happy, or is he pure? For all practical purposes, these questions hardly matter. They become important only when one is forced to take sides in choosing which version to translate, and even then the nature of the choice is like that of a conductor deciding which of the many versions of a Handel oratorio to perform.

Unfortunately for the translator, though, the scholarly discussions that have grown around these issues have tended to blow them all out of proportion, to the point where they call into question the authenticity of the Dhp as a whole. Because the scholars who have

devoted themselves to this topic have come up with such contradictory advice for the potential translator—including the suggestion that it's a waste of time to translate some of the verses at all—we need to sort through the discussions to see what, if any, reliable guidance they give.

Those who have worked on the issues raised by the variant versions of Dhp have, by and large, directed the discussion to figuring out which version is the oldest and most authentic, and which versions are later and more corrupt. Lacking any outside landmarks against which the versions can be sighted, scholars have attempted to reconstruct what must have been the earliest version by triangulating among the texts themselves. This textual trigonometry tends to rely on assumptions from among the following three types:

1) *Assumptions concerning what is inherently an earlier or later form of a verse.* These assumptions are the least reliable of the three, for they involve no truly objective criteria. If, for instance, two versions of a verse differ in that one is more internally consistent than the other, the consistent version will seem more genuine to one scholar, whereas another scholar will attribute the consistency to later efforts to "clean up" the verse. Similarly, if one version contains a rendition of a verse different from all other renditions of the same verse, one scholar will see that as a sign of deviance; another, as a sign of the authenticity that may have predated a later standardization among the texts. Thus the conclusions drawn by different scholars based on these assumptions tell us

more about the scholars' presuppositions than they do about the texts themselves.

2) Assumptions concerning the meter of the verses in question. One of the great advances in recent Pali scholarship has been the rediscovery of the metrical rules underlying early Pali poetry. As the Buddha himself is quoted as saying, "Meter is the structural framework of verses." (S.1.60) Knowledge of metrical rules thus helps the editor or translator spot which readings of a verse deviate from the structure of a standard meter, and which ones follow it. Theoretically, the obvious choice would be to adopt the latter and reject the former. In practice, however, the issue is not so clear-cut. Early Pali poetry dates from a time of great metrical experimentation, and so there is always the possibility that a particular poem was composed in an experimental meter that never achieved widespread recognition. There is also the possibility that—as the poetry was spontaneous and oral—a fair amount of metrical license was allowed. This means that the more "correct" forms of a verse may have been the products of a later attempt to fit the poetry into standard molds. Thus the conclusions based on the assumption of standard meters are not as totally reliable as they might seem.

3) Assumptions concerning the language in which the original Dhp was first composed. These assumptions require an extensive knowledge of Middle Indic dialects. A scholar will assume a particular dialect to have been the original language of the text, and will further make assumptions

about the types of translation mistakes that might have been common when translating from that dialect into the languages of the texts we now have. The textual trigonometry based on these assumptions often involves such complicated methods of sighting and computation that it can produce an "original" version of the text that is just that: very original, coinciding with none of the versions extant. In other words, where the current variants of a verse might be *a*, *b*, and *c*, the added assumption about the Dhp's original language and the ineptitude of ancient translators and copyists leads to the conclusion that the verse must have been *d*. However, for all the impressive erudition that this method involves, not even the most learned scholar can offer any proof as to what the Dhp's original language was. In fact, as we will consider below, it is possible that the Buddha—assuming that he was the author of the verses—composed poetry in more than one language, and more than one version of a particular verse. So, as with the first set of assumptions, the methods of triangulation based on an assumed original language of the Dhp tell us more about the individual scholar's position than they do about the position of the text.

Thus, although the scholarship devoted to the different recensions of the Dhp has provided a useful service in unearthing so many variant readings of the text, none of the assumptions used in trying to sort through those readings for "the original" Dhp have led to any definite conclusions. Their positive success has been limited

mainly to offering food for academic speculation and educated guesses.

On the negative side, though, they have succeeded in accomplishing something totally useless: a wholesale sense of distrust for the early Buddhist texts, and the poetic texts in particular. If the texts contain so many varying reports, the feeling goes, and if their translators and transmitters were so incompetent, how can any of them be trusted? This distrust comes from accepting, unconsciously, the assumptions concerning authorship and authenticity within which our modern, predominately literate culture operates: that only one version of a verse could have been composed by its original author, and that all other versions must be later corruptions. In terms of the Dhp, this comes down to assuming that there was only one original version of the text, and that it was composed in a single language.

However, these assumptions are totally inappropriate for analyzing the oral culture in which the Buddha taught and in which the verses of the Dhp were first anthologized. If we look carefully at the nature of that culture—and in particular at clear statements from the early Buddhist texts concerning the events and principles that shaped those texts—we will see that it is perfectly natural that there should be a variety of reports about the Buddha's teachings, all of which might be essentially correct. In terms of the Dhp, we can view the multiple versions of the text as a sign, not of faulty transmission, but of an allegiance to their oral origins.

Oral prose and poetry are very different from their written counterparts. This fact is obvious even in our own culture. However, we have to make an active effort of the imagination to comprehend the expectations placed on oral transmission between speakers and listeners in a culture where there is no written word to fall back on. In such a setting, the verbal heritage is maintained totally through repetition and memorization. A speaker with something new to say has to repeat it often to different audiences—who, if they feel inspired by the message, are expected to memorize at least its essential parts. Because communication is face-to-face, a speaker is particularly prized for an ability to tailor his/her message to the moment of communication, in terms of the audience's background from the past, its state of mind at present, and its hoped-for benefits in the future.

This puts a double imperative on both the speaker and the listener. The speaker must choose his/her words with an eye both to how they will affect the audience in the present and to how they will be memorized for future reference. The listener must be attentive, both to appreciate the immediate impact of the words and to memorize them for future use. Although originality in teaching is appreciated, it is only one of a constellation of virtues expected of a teacher. Other expected virtues include a knowledge of common culture and an ability to play with that knowledge for the desired effect in terms of immediate impact or memorability. The Pali Dhp (verse 45) itself makes this point in comparing the act of

teaching, not to creating something totally new out of nothing, but to selecting among available flowers to create a pleasing arrangement just right for the occasion.

Of course, there are situations in an oral culture where either immediate impact or memorability is emphasized at the expense of the other. In a classroom, listening for impact is sacrificed to the needs of listening for memorization, whereas in a theater, the emphasis is reversed. All indications show, however, that the Buddha as a teacher was especially sensitive to both aspects of oral communication, and that he trained his listeners to be sensitive to both as well. On the one hand, the repetitious style of many of his recorded teachings seems to have been aimed at hammering them into the listener's memory; also, at the end of many of his discourses, he would summarize the main points of the discussion in an easy-to-memorize verse.

On the other hand, there are many reports of instances in which his listeners gained immediate Awakening while listening to his words. And, there is a delightful section in one of his discourses (the Samaññaphala Suttanta, D.2) satirizing the teachers of other religious sects for their inability to break away from the formulaic mode of their teachings to give a direct answer to specific questions ("It's as if, when asked about a mango, one were to answer with a breadfruit," one of the interlocutors comments, "or, when asked about a breadfruit, to answer with a mango.") The Buddha, in contrast, was famous for his ability to speak directly to his listeners' needs.

This sensitivity to both present impact and future use is in line with two well-known Buddhist teachings: first, the basic Buddhist principle of causality, that an act has repercussions both in the present and on into the future; second, the Buddha's realization, early on in his teaching career, that some of his listeners would attain Awakening immediately on hearing his words, whereas others would be able to awaken only after taking his words, contemplating them, and putting them into prolonged practice.

A survey of the Buddha's prose discourses recorded in the Pali Canon gives an idea of how the Buddha met the double demands placed on him as a teacher. In some cases, to respond to a particular situation, he would formulate an entirely original teaching. In others, he would simply repeat a formulaic answer that he kept in store for general use: either teachings original with him, or more traditional teachings—sometimes lightly tailored, sometimes not—that fit in with his message. In still others, he would take formulaic bits and pieces, and combine them in a new way for the needs at hand. A survey of his poetry reveals the same range of material: original works; set pieces—original or borrowed, occasionally altered in line with the occasion; and recyclings of old fragments in new juxtapositions.

Thus, although the Buddha insisted that all his teachings had the same taste—that of release—he taught different variations on the theme of that taste to different people on different occasions, in line with his perception of their short- and long-term needs. In reciting

a verse to a particular audience, he might change a word, a line, or an image, to fit in with their backgrounds and individual needs.

Adding to this potential for variety was the fact that the people of northern India in his time spoke a number of different dialects, each with its own traditions of poetry and prose. The Pali Cullavagga (v.33.1) records the Buddha as insisting that his listeners memorize his teachings, not in a standardized *lingua franca*, but in their own dialects. There is no way of knowing whether he himself was multi-lingual enough to teach all of his students in their own dialects, or expected them to make the translations themselves. Still, it seems likely that, as a well-educated aristocrat of the time, he would have been fluent in at least two or three of the most prevalent dialects. Some of the discourses—such as D.21—depict the Buddha as an articulate connoisseur of poetry and song, so we can expect that he would also have been sensitive to the special problems involved in the effective translation of poetry—alive, for instance, to the fact that skilled translation requires more than simply substituting equivalent words. The Mahavagga (v.13.9) reports that the Buddha listened, with appreciation, as a monk from the southern country of Avanti recited some of his teachings—apparently in the Avanti dialect—in his presence. Although scholars have often raised questions about which language the Buddha spoke, it might be more appropriate to remain open to the possibility that he spoke—and could compose poetry in—several. This

possibility makes the question of "the" original language or "the" original text of the Dhp somewhat irrelevant.

The texts suggest that even during the Buddha's lifetime his students made efforts to collect and memorize a standardized body of his teachings under a rubric of nine categories: dialogues, narratives of mixed prose and verse, explanations, verses, spontaneous exclamations, quotations, birth stories, amazing events, question and answer sessions. However, the act of collecting and memorizing was pursued by only a sub-group among his monks, while other monks, nuns, and lay people doubtlessly had their own individual memorized stores of teachings they had heard directly from the Buddha or indirectly through the reports of their friends and acquaintances.

The Buddha had the foresight to ensure that this less standardized fund of memories not be discounted by later generations; at the same time, he established norms so that mistaken reports, deviating from the principles of his teachings, would not be allowed to creep into the accepted body of doctrine. To discourage fabricated reports of his words, he warned that anyone who put words in his mouth was slandering him (A.II.23). This, however, could in no way prevent mistaken reports based on honest misunderstandings. So, shortly before his death, he summarized the basic principles of his teachings: the 37 Wings to Awakening (*bodhi-pakkhiya dhamma*—see note to verse 301) in the general framework of the development of virtue, concentration, and discernment, leading to release. Then he announced the

general norms by which reports of his teachings were to be judged. The Mahaparinibbana Suttanta (D.16) quotes him as saying:

> "There is the case where a monk says this: 'In the Blessed One's presence have I heard this, in the Blessed One's presence have I received this...In the presence of a community with well-known leading elders...In a monastery with many learned elders who know the tradition...In the presence of a single elder who knows the tradition have I heard this, in his presence have I received this: This is the Dhamma, this is the Vinaya, this is the Teacher's instruction.' His statement is neither to be approved nor scorned. Without approval or scorn, take careful note of his words and make them stand against the discourses and tally them against the Vinaya. If, on making them stand against the discourses and tallying them against the Vinaya, you find that they don't stand with the discourses or tally with the Vinaya, you may conclude: 'This is not the word of the Blessed One; this monk has misunderstood it'—and you should reject it. But if...they stand with the discourses and tally with the Vinaya, you may conclude: 'This is the word of the Blessed One; this monk has understood it rightly.'"

Thus, a report of the Buddha's teachings was to be judged, not on the authority of the reporter or his sources, but on the principle of consistency: did it fit in

with what was already known of the doctrine? This principle was designed to ensure that nothing at odds with the original would be accepted into the standard canon, but it did open the possibility that teachings in line with the Buddha's, yet not actually spoken by him, might find their way in. The early redactors of the canon seem to have been alert to this possibility, but not overly worried by it. As the Buddha himself pointed out many times, he did not design or create the Dhamma. He simply found it in nature. Anyone who developed the pitch of mental strengths and abilities needed for Awakening could discover the same principles as well. Thus the Dhamma was by no means exclusively his.

This attitude was carried over into the passages of the Vinaya that cite four categories of Dhamma statements: spoken by the Buddha, spoken by his disciples, spoken by seers (non-Buddhist sages), spoken by heavenly beings. As long as a statement was in accordance with the basic principles, the question of who first stated it did not matter. In an oral culture, where a saying might be associated with a person because he authored it, approved it, repeated it often, or inspired it by his/her words or actions, the question of authorship was not the overriding concern it has since become in literate cultures. The recent discovery of evidence that a number of teachings associated with the Buddha may have pre- or post-dated his time would not have fazed the early Buddhists at all, as long as those teachings were in accordance with the original principles.

Shortly after the Buddha's passing away, the Cullavagga (XI) reports, his disciples met to agree on a standardized canon of his teachings, abandoning the earlier nine-fold classification and organizing the material into something approaching the canon we have today. There is clear evidence that some of the passages in the extant canon do not date to the first convocation, as they report incidents that took place afterwards. The question naturally arises as to whether there are any other later additions not so obvious. This question is particularly relevant with regard to texts like the Dhp, whose organization differs considerably from redaction to redaction, and leads naturally to the further question of whether a later addition to the canon can be considered authentic. The Cullavagga (XI.I.II) recounts an incident that sheds light on this issue:

> Now at that time, Ven. Purana was wandering on a tour of the Southern Hills with a large community of monks, approximately 500 in all. Then, having stayed as long as he liked in the Southern Hills while the elder monks were standardizing the Dhamma and Vinaya, he went to the Bamboo Park, the Squirrels' Sanctuary, in Rajagaha. On arrival, he went to the elder monks and, after exchanging pleasantries, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, they said to him, "Friend Purana, the Dhamma and Vinaya have been standardized by the elders. Switch over to their standardization." [He replied:] "The Dhamma and Vinaya have

been well-standardized by the elders. Still, I will hold simply to what I have heard and received in the presence of the Blessed One."

In other words, Ven. Purana maintained—and undoubtedly taught to his followers—a record of the Buddha's teachings that lay outside the standardized version, but was nevertheless authentic. As we have already noted, there were monks, nuns, and lay people like him even while the Buddha was alive, and there were probably others like him who continued maintaining personal memories of the Buddha's teachings even after the latter's death. This story shows the official early Buddhist attitude toward such differing traditions: each accepted the trustworthiness of the others. As time passed, some of the early communities may have made an effort to include these "external" records in the standardized canon, resulting in various collections of prose and verse passages. The range of these collections would have been determined by the material that was available in, or could be effectively translated into, each individual dialect. Their organization would have depended on the taste and skill of the individual collectors. Thus, for instance, we find verses in the Pali Dhp that do not exist in other Dhps, as well as verses in the Patna and Gandhari Dhps that the Pali tradition assigns to the Jataka or Sutta Nipata. We also find verses in one redaction composed of lines scattered among several verses in another. In any event, the fact that a text was a later addition to the standardized canon does not necessarily mean that it was a

later invention. Given the ad hoc way in which the Buddha sometimes taught, and the scattered nature of the communities who memorized his teachings, the later additions to the canons may simply represent earlier traditions that escaped standardization until relatively late.

When Buddhists began committing their canons to writing, approximately at the beginning of the common era, they brought a great change to the dynamic of how their traditions were maintained. The advantages of written over oral transmission are obvious: the texts are saved from the vagaries of human long-term memory and do not die out if those who have memorized them die before teaching others to memorize them as well. The disadvantages of written transmission, however, are less obvious but no less real. Not only is there the possibility of scribal error, but—because transmission is not face-to-face—there can also be the *suspicion* of scribal error. If a reading seems strange to a student, he has no way of checking with the scribe, perhaps several generations distant, to see if the reading was indeed a mistake. When confronted with such problems, he may "correct" the reading to fit in with his ideas of what must be right, even in cases where the reading was correct, and its perceived strangeness was simply a result of changes in the spoken dialect or of his own limited knowledge and imagination. The fact that manuscripts of other versions of the text were also available for comparison in such instances could have led scribes to homogenize the texts, removing

unusual variants even when the variants themselves may have gone back to the earliest days of the tradition.

These considerations of how the Dhp may have been handed down to the present—and especially the possibility that (1) variant recensions might all be authentic, and that (2) agreement among the recensions might be the result of later homogenization—have determined the way in which I have approached this translation of the Pali Dhp. Unlike some other recent translators, I am treating the Pali Dhp as a text with its own integrity—just as each of the alternative traditions has its own integrity—and have not tried to homogenize the various traditions. Where the different Pali recensions are unanimous in their readings, even in cases where the reading seems strange (e.g., 71, 209, 259, 346), I have stuck with the Pali without trying to "rectify" it in light of less unusual readings given in the other traditions. Only in cases where the different Pali redactions are at variance with one another, and the variants seem equally plausible, have I checked the non-Pali texts to see which variant they support. The translation here is drawn from three editions of the text: the Pali Text Society (PTS) edition edited by O. von Hinüber and K.R. Norman (1995); the Oxford edition edited by John Ross Carter and Mahinda Palihawadana, together with its extensive notes (1987); and the Royal Thai edition of the Pali Canon (1982). The PTS edition gives the most extensive list of variant readings among the Pali recensions, but

even it is not complete. The Royal Thai edition, for example, contains 49 preferred and 8 variant readings not given in the PTS version at all. Passages where I have differed from the PTS reading are cited in the End Notes.

Drawing selectively on various recensions in this way, I cannot guarantee that the resulting reading of the Dhp corresponds exactly to the Buddha's words, or to any one text that once existed in ancient India. However, as I mentioned at the beginning of this note, all the recensions agree in their basic principles, so the question is immaterial. The true test of the reading—and the resulting translation—is if the reader feels engaged enough by the verses to put their principles into practice and finds that they do indeed lead to the release that the Buddha taught. In the final analysis, nothing else really counts.

End Notes

(Numbers refer to verses)

1-2: The fact that the word *mano* is paired here with *dhamma* would seem to suggest that it is meant in its role as "intellect," the sense medium that conveys knowledge of ideas or mental objects (two possible meanings for the word *dhamma*). However, the illustrations in the second sentence of each verse show that it is actually meant in its role as the mental factor responsible for the quality of one's actions (as in *mano-kamma*), the factor of will and intention, shaping not only mental events, but also physical reality (on this point, see S.xxxv.145). Thus, following a Thai tradition, I have rendered it here as "heart."

The images in these verses are carefully chosen. The cart, representing suffering, is a burden on the ox pulling it, and the weight of its wheels obliterates the ox's track. The shadow, representing happiness, is no weight on the body at all.

All Pali recensions of this verse give the reading, *manomaya* = made of the heart, while all other recensions give the reading *manojava* = impelled by the heart.

7-8: Focused on the foul: A meditative exercise in focusing on the foul aspects of the body so as to help undercut lust and attachment for the body (see M.119). A.III.16 gives a standard definition for restraint with the

senses: "And how does a monk guard the doors to his sense faculties? There is the case where a monk, on seeing a form with the eye, does not grasp at any theme or particulars by which—if he were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of the eye—evil, unskillful qualities such as greed or distress might assail him. He practices with restraint. He guards the faculty of the eye. He achieves restraint with regard to the faculty of the eye. (Similarly with the ear, nose, tongue, body & intellect.) This is how a monk guards the doors to his sense faculties."

11-12: Wrong resolves = mental resolves for sensuality, ill will, or harmfulness. Right resolves = mental resolves for freedom from sensuality, for freedom from ill will, and for harmlessness.

17-18: "Destination" in these two verses and throughout the text means one's destination after death.

21: The Deathless = Unbinding *(nibbana/nirvana)*, which gives release from the cycle of death and rebirth.

22: "The range of the noble ones": Any of the four stages of Awakening, as well as the total Unbinding to which they lead. The four stages are: (1) stream-entry, at which one abandons the first three mental fetters tying one to the round of rebirth: self-identity views, uncertainty, and grasping at precepts and practices; (2) once-returning, at which passion, aversion, and delusion are further weakened; (3) non-returning, at which sensual passion and irritation are abandoned; and (4) arahantship, at which

the final five fetters are abandoned: passion for form, passion for formless phenomena, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. For other references to the "range of the noble ones," see 92-93 and 179-180.

37: "Lying in a cave": According to the Dhp Commentary (hereafter referred to as DhpA), "cave" here means the physical heart, as well as the four great properties—earth (solidity), water (liquidity), fire (heat), and wind (motion)—that make up the body. Sn.IV.2 also compares the body to a cave.

39: According to DhpA, "unsoddened mind" means one into which the rain of passion doesn't penetrate (see 13-14); "unassaulted awareness" means a mind not assaulted by anger. "Beyond merit & evil": The arahant is beyond merit and evil in that he/she has none of the mental defilements—passion, aversion, or delusion—that would lead to evil actions, and none of the attachments that would cause his/her actions to bear kammic fruit of any sort, good or bad.

40: "Without settling there, without laying claim": two meanings of the word *anivesano.*

42: A.VII.60 illustrates this point with seven ways that a person harms him/herself when angry, bringing on results that an enemy would wish: He/she becomes ugly, sleeps badly, mistakes profit for loss and loss for profit, loses wealth, loses his/her reputation, loses friends, and acts in such a way that—after death—he/she reappears in a bad rebirth.

44-45: "Dhamma-saying": This is a translation for the term *dhammapada.* To ferret out the well-taught Dhamma-saying means to select the appropriate maxim to apply to a particular situation, in the same way that a flower-arranger chooses the right flower, from a heap of available flowers (see 53), to fit into a particular spot in the arrangement. "The learner-on-the-path": A person who has attained any of the first three of the four stages of Awakening (see note 22).

48: According to DhpA, the End-maker is death. According to another ancient commentary, the End-maker is Mara.

53: The last line of the Pali here can be read in two ways, either "even so, many a skillful thing should be done by one born & mortal" or "even so, many a skillful thing should be done with what's born & mortal." The first reading takes the phrase *jatena maccena,* born & mortal, as being analogous to the flower-arranger implicit in the image. The second takes it as analogous to the heap of flowers explicitly mentioned. In this sense, "what's born & is mortal" would denote one's body, wealth, and talents.

54-56: Tagara = a shrub that, in powdered form, is used as a perfume. A.III.79 explains the how the scent of a virtuous person goes against the wind and wafts to the devas, by saying that those human and celestial beings who know of the good character of a virtuous person will broadcast one's good name in all directions.

57: "Right knowing": the knowledge of full Awakening.

71: "Doesn't—like ready milk—come out right away": All Pali recensions of this verse give the verb *muccati*—"to come out" or "to be released"—whereas DhpA agrees with the Sanskrit recensions in reading the verb as if it were *mucchati/murchati*, "to curdle." The former reading makes more sense, both in terms of the image of the poem—which contrasts *coming out* with *staying hidden*—and with the plain fact that fresh milk doesn't curdle right away. The Chinese translation of Dhp supports this reading, as do two of three scholarly editions of the Patna Dhp.

79: "Drinking the Dhamma, refreshed by the Dhamma": two meanings of the word, *dhammapiti*. "Clear ... calm": two meanings of *vipasannena*.

83: "Stand apart": reading *cajanti* with DhpA and many Asian editions.

86: The syntax of this verse yields the best sense if we take *param* as meaning "across," and not as "the far shore."

89: Factors for self-awakening = mindfulness, analysis of qualities, persistence, rapture, serenity, concentration, and equanimity.

92-93: "Having understood food .... independent of nutriment": The first question in the Novice's Questions (Khp 4) is "What is one?" The answer: "All animals subsist on nutriment." The concept of food and nutriment here refers to the most basic way of understanding the

causal principle that plays such a central role in the Buddha's teaching. As S.xII.64 points out, "There are these four nutriments for the establishing of beings who have taken birth or for the support of those in search of a place to be born. Which four? Physical nutriment, gross or refined; contact as the second, consciousness the third, and intellectual intention the fourth." The present verses make the point that the arahant has so fully understood the process of physical and mental causality that he/she is totally independent of it, and thus will never take birth again. Such a person cannot be comprehended by any of the forms of understanding that operate within the causal realm.

94: "Such *(tadin)*": an adjective used to describe one who has attained the goal of Buddhist practice, indicating that the person's state is indefinable but not subject to change or influences of any sort. "Right knowing": the knowledge of full Awakening.

95: Indra's pillar = a post set up at the gate of a city. According to DhpA, there was an ancient custom of worshipping this post with flowers and offerings, although those who wanted to show their disrespect for this custom would urinate and defecate on the post. In either case, the post did not react.

97: This verse is a series of puns. The negative meanings of the puns are on the left side of the slashes; the positive meanings, on the right. The negative meanings are so extremely negative that they were probably intended to shock their listeners. One scholar has suggested that the

last word—*uttamaporiso,* the ultimate person—should also be read as a pun, with the negative meaning, "the extreme of audacity," but that would weaken the shock value of the verse.

100: According to DhpA, the word *sahassam* in this and the following verses means "by the thousands" rather than "a thousand." The same principle would also seem to hold for *satam*—"by the hundreds" rather than "a hundred"—in 102.

108: "Doesn't come to a fourth": DhpA: The merit produced by all sacrificial offerings given in the world in the course of a year doesn't equal even one fourth of the merit made by paying homage once to one who has gone the straight way to Unbinding.

121-122: "('It won't come to *me*')": The Thai edition reads this line as *na mattam agamissati* = "[Thinking] it won't amount to much."

126: Heaven and hell, in the Buddhist view of the cosmos, are not eternal states. One may be reborn on one of the various levels of heaven or hell as the result of one's kamma on the human plane, and then leave that level when that particular store of kamma wears out.

143: Some translators have proposed that the verb *apabodheti,* here translated as "awakens" should be changed to *appam bodheti,* "to think little of." This, however, goes against the sense of the verse and of a recurrent image in the Canon, that the better-bred the horse, the more sensitive it is even to the idea of the whip, to say nothing of the whip itself. See, for example, A.IV.113.

The question raised in this verse is answered in S.1.18:

> Those restrained by conscience
> are rare—
> those who go through life
> always mindful.
> Having reached the end
> of suffering & stress,
> they go through what is uneven
> evenly;
> go through what is out-of-tune
> in tune.

152: Muscles: This is a translation of the Pali *mansani,* which is usually rendered in this verse as "flesh." However, because the Pali word is in the plural form, "muscles" seems more accurate—and more to the point.

153-154: DhpA: These verses were the Buddha's first utterance after his full Awakening. For some reason, they are not reported in any of the other canonical accounts of the events following on the Awakening.

DhpA: "House" = selfhood; house-builder = craving. "House" may also refer to the nine abodes of beings—the seven stations of consciousness and two spheres (see Khp 4 and D.15).

The word *anibbisam* in 153 can be read either as the negative gerund of *nibbisati* ("earning, gaining a reward") or as the negative gerund of *nivisati,* altered to fit the meter, meaning "coming to a rest, settled, situated." Both readings make sense in the context of the verse, so the

word is probably intended to have a double meaning: without reward, without rest.

157: "The three watches of the night": this is the literal meaning of the verse, but DhpA shows that the image of staying up to nurse someone in the night is meant to stand for being wakeful and attentive throughout the three stages of life: youth, middle age, and old age. The point here is that it is never too early or too late to wake up and begin nurturing the good qualities of mind that will lead to one's true benefit. On this point, see A.III.51-52, where the Buddha counsels two old brahmans, nearing the end of their life span, to begin practicing generosity along with restraint in thought, word, and deed.

162: DhpA completes the image of the poem by saying that one's vice brings about one's own downfall, just as a maluva creeper ultimately brings about the downfall of the tree it overspreads. See note 42.

164: A bamboo plant bears fruit only once, and then dies soon after.

165: "No one purifies another. No other purifies one." These are the two meanings of the one phrase, *nañño aññam visodhaye.*

166: A.IV.95 lists four types of people in descending order: those devoted to their own true welfare as well as that of others, those devoted to their own true welfare but not that of others, those devoted to the true welfare of others but not their own, and those devoted neither to their own true welfare nor that of others. S.XLVII.19

makes the point that if one is truly devoted to one's own welfare, others automatically benefit, in the same way that an acrobat maintaining his/her own balance helps his/her partner stay balanced as well.

170: Sn.v.15 reports a conversation between the Buddha and the brahman Mogharaja with a point similar to that of this verse:

Mogharaja:

How does one view the world
so as not to be seen
by Death's king?

The Buddha:

View the world, Mogharaja,
as empty—
always mindful
to have removed any view
about self.
This way one is above & beyond death.
This is how one views the world
so as not to be seen
by Death's king.

176: This verse is also found at Iti.25, where the context makes clear the meaning of *ekam dhammam,* or "this one thing": the principle of truthfulness.

178: The fruit of Stream Entry is the first of the four stages of Awakening (see note 22). A person who has

attained Stream Entry—entry into the stream that flows inevitably to Unbinding—is destined to attain full Awakening within at most seven lifetimes, never falling below the human state in the interim.

183-185: These verses are a summary of a talk called the Ovada Patimokkha, which the Buddha is said to have delivered to an assembly of 1,250 arahants in the first year after his Awakening. Verse 183 is traditionally viewed as expressing the heart of the Buddha's teachings.

191: The noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

195-196: Complications = *papañca*. Alternative translations of this term would be proliferation, elaboration, exaggeration. The term is used both in philosophical contexts—in connection with troubles and conflict—and in artistic contexts, in connection with excessive detail and elaboration. M.18 states: "Dependent on eye & forms, eye-consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition, there is feeling. What one feels, one apperceives (labels in the mind). What one apperceives, one thinks about. What one thinks about, one complicates. Based on what a person complicates, the apperceptions & categories of complication assail him/her with regard to past, present, & future forms cognizable via the eye. [Similarly with the other senses.] .... Now, with regard to the cause whereby the apperceptions & categories of complication assail a person: if there is nothing there to relish, welcome, or

remain fastened to, then that is the end of the underlying tendencies to passion, to irritation, to views, to uncertainty, to conceit, to passion for becoming, & to ignorance. That is the end of taking up rods & bladed weapons, of arguments, quarrels, disputes, accusations, divisive tale-bearing, & false speech. That is where these evil, unskillful things cease without remainder."

209: This verse plays with the various meanings of *yoga* (task, striving, application, meditation) and a related term, *anuyuñjati* (keeping after something, taking someone to task). In place of the Pali reading *attanuyoginam,* "those who kept after themselves," the Patna Dhp reads *atthanuyoginam,* "those who kept after/remained devoted to the goal."

218: "The up-flowing stream": DhpA: the attainment of non-returning, the third of the four stages of Awakening (see note 22).

231-233: Bodily misconduct = killing, stealing, engaging in illicit sex. Verbal misconduct = lies, divisive speech, harsh speech, idle chatter. Mental misconduct = covetousness, ill will, wrong views.

235: Yama = the god of the underworld. Yama's minions or underlings were believed to appear to a person just prior to the moment of death.

236: Impurities, blemishes = passion, aversion, delusion, and their various permutations, including envy, miserliness, hypocrisy, and boastfulness.

240: "One who lives slovenly": As DhpA makes clear, this refers to one who uses the requisites of food, clothing, shelter, and medicine without the wisdom that comes with reflecting on their proper use. The Pali term here is *atidhonacarin*, a compound built around the word *dhona*, which means clean or pure. The *ati-* in the compound could mean "overly," thus yielding, "one overly scrupulous in his behavior," but it can also mean "transgressing," thus, "transgressing against what is clean" = "slovenly." The latter reading fits better with the image of rust as a deficiency in the iron resulting from carelessness.

254-255: "No outside contemplative": No true contemplative, defined as a person who has attained any of the four stages of Awakening, exists outside of the practice of the Buddha's teachings (see note 22). In D.16, the Buddha is quoted as teaching his final student: "In any doctrine & discipline where the noble eightfold path is not found, no contemplative of the first...second... third...fourth order [stream-winner, once-returner, non-returner, or arahant] is found. But in any doctrine & discipline where the noble eightfold path *is* found, contemplatives of the first...second...third...fourth order *are* found. The noble eightfold path is found in this doctrine & discipline, and right here there are contemplatives of the first...second...third...fourth order. Other teachings are empty of knowledgeable contemplatives. And if the monks dwell rightly, this world will not be empty of arahants." (On the noble eightfold path, see note 191.)

On "complication," see note 195-196.

256-257: The sense of the verse, confirmed by DhpA, suggests that the Pali word *dhammattho* means "judge." This, in fact, is the theme tying together the verses in this chapter. The duty of a judge is to correctly determine *attha,* a word that denotes both "meaning" and "judgment," these two senses of the word being connected by the fact that the judge must interpret the meanings of words used in rules and principles to see how they correctly apply to the particulars of a case so that he can pass a correct verdict. The remaining verses in this chapter give examples of interpreting *attha* in an appropriate way.

259: "Sees Dhamma through his body": The more common expression in the Pali Canon is to touch Dhamma through or with the body (*phusati* or *phassati,* he touches, rather than *passati,* he sees). The Sanskrit recensions and the Patna Dhp all support the reading, "he would touch," but all Pali recensions are unanimous in the reading, "he sees." Some scholars regard this latter reading as a corruption of the verse; I personally find it a more striking image than the common expression.

265: This verse plays with a number of nouns and verbs related to the adjective *sama,* which means "even," "equal," "on pitch," or "in tune." Throughout ancient cultures, the terminology of music was used to describe the moral quality of people and acts. Discordant intervals or poorly-tuned musical instruments were metaphors for evil; harmonious intervals and well-tuned instruments, for good. Thus in Pali, *samana,* or contemplative, also means a person who is in tune with the principles of

rightness and truth inherent in nature. Here and in 388, I've attempted to give a hint of these implications by associating the word "contemplative" with "consonance."

268-269: This verse contains the Buddhist refutation of the idea that "those who know don't speak, those who speak don't know." For another refutation of the same idea, see D.12. In Vedic times, a sage (*muni*) was a person who took a vow of silence (*mona*) and was supposed to gain special knowledge as a result. The Buddhists adopted the term *muni*, but redefined it to show how true knowledge was attained and how it expressed itself in the sage's actions. For a fuller portrait of the ideal Buddhist sage, see A.III.23 and Sn.I.12.

271-272: This verse has what seems to be a rare construction, in which *na* + instrumental nouns + a verb in the aorist tense gives the force of a prohibitive ("Don't, on account of *x*, do *y*"). "The renunciate ease that run-of-the-mill people don't know," according to DhpA, is the state of non-returning, the third of the four stages of Awakening (see note 22). Because non-returners are still attached to subtle states of becoming on the level of form and formlessness, DhpA drives home the message that even non-returners should not be complacent by paraphrasing a passage from A.I (203 in the Thai edition; at the end of Chapter XIX in the PTS edition) that reads, "Just as even a small amount of excrement is foul-smelling, in the same way I do not praise even a small amount of becoming, not even as much as a fingersnap."

273: The four truths: stress, its cause, its cessation, and the path to its cessation (which is identical to the eightfold path). See note 191.

275: "I have taught you this path": reading *akkhato vo maya maggo* with the Thai edition, a reading supported by the Patna Dhp. "Having known—for your knowing": two ways of interpreting what is apparently a play on the Pali word, *aññaya,* which can be either be the gerund of *ajanati* or the dative of *añña.* On the extraction of arrows as a metaphor for the practice, see M.63 and M.105.

285: Although the first word in this verse, *ucchinda,* literally means "crush," "destroy," "annihilate," I have found no previous English translation that renders it accordingly. Most translate it as "cut out" or "uproot," which weakens the image. On the role played by self-allure in leading the heart to become fixated on others, see A.VII.48.

288: Ender = death.

293: Mindfulness immersed in the body = the practice of focusing on the body at all times simply as a phenomenon in and of itself, as a way of developing meditative absorption *(jhana)* and removing any sense of attraction to, distress over, or identification with the body. M.119 lists the following practices as instances of mindfulness immersed in the body: mindfulness of breathing, awareness of the four postures of the body (standing, sitting, walking, lying down), alertness to all the actions of the body, analysis of the body into its 32 parts, analysis of it into its four properties (earth, water, fire, wind), and contemplation of the body's inevitable decomposition after death.

294: This verse and the one following it use terms with ambiguous meanings to shock the listener. According to DhpA, mother = craving; father = conceit; two warrior kings = views of eternalism (that one has an identity remaining constant through all time) and of annihilationism (that one's consciousness is totally annihilated at death); kingdom = the twelve sense spheres (the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, feeling, and ideation, together with their respective objects); dependency = passions for the sense spheres.

295: DhpA: two learned kings = views of eternalism and annihilationism; a tiger = the path where the tiger goes for food, i.e., the hindrance of uncertainty, or else all five hindrances (sensual desire, ill will, torpor & lethargy, restlessness & anxiety, and uncertainty). However, in Sanskrit literature, "tiger" is a term for a powerful and eminent man; if that is what is meant here, the term may stand for anger.

299: See note 293.

301: "Developing the mind" in terms of the 37 Wings to Awakening: the four frames of reference (ardent, mindful alertness to body, feelings, mind states, and mental qualities in and of themselves), the four right exertions (to abandon and avoid evil, unskillful mental qualities, and to foster and strengthen skillful mental qualities), the four bases of power (concentration based on desire, persistence, intentness, and discrimination), the five strengths and five faculties (conviction, persistencc, mindfulness, concentration, and discernment), the seven factors for self-awakening

(see note 89), and the noble eightfold path (see note 191). For a full treatment of this topic, see *The Wings to Awakening* (DhammaDana Publications, 1996).

303: DhpA: Wealth = both material wealth and the seven forms of noble wealth *(ariya-dhana)*: conviction, virtue, conscience, concern (for the results of evil actions), erudition, generosity, discernment.

324: DhpA: Dhanapalaka was a noble elephant captured for the king of Kasi. Although given palatial quarters with the finest food, he showed no interest, but thought only of the sorrow his mother felt, alone in the elephant wood, separated from her son.

329-330: DhpA: The bull elephant named Matanga, reflecting on the inconveniences of living in a herd crowded with she-elephants and young elephants—he was pushed around as he went into the river, had to drink muddied water, had to eat leaves that others had already nibbled, etc.—decided that he would find more pleasure in living alone. His story parallels that of the elephant the Buddha met in the Parileyyaka Forest (Mv.x.4.6-7).

337: This verse provides a Buddhist twist to the typical benedictions found in works of kavya. Instead of expressing a wish that the listeners meet with wealth, fame, status, or other worldly forms of good fortune, this verse describes the highest good fortune, which can be accomplished only through one's own skillful kamma: the uprooting of craving and the resulting state of total freedom from the round of death and rebirth. A similar

twist on the theme of good fortune is found in the Mangala Sutta (Khp.5, Sn.II.4), which teaches that the best protective charm is to develop skillful kamma, ultimately developing the mind to the point where it is untouched by the vagaries of the world.

339: 36 streams = three forms of desire for each of the internal and external sense spheres (see note 294)—3 x 2 x 6 = 36. According to one sub-commentary, the three forms of desire are desires focused on the present, past, and future. According to another, they are craving for sensuality, craving for becoming, and craving for no-becoming.

340: "Every which way": Reading *sabbadhi* with the Thai and Burmese editions. The creeper, according to DhpA, is craving, which sends thoughts out to wrap around its objects, while it itself stays rooted in the mind.

341: This verse contains an implied simile: the terms "loosened & oiled," here applied to joys, were commonly used to describe smooth bowel movements.

343: For the various meanings that *attano*—"for himself"—can have in this verse, see note 402.

346: "Elastic": The usual translation for *sithilam*—"slack"—does not fit in this verse, but all the Pali recensions are unanimous on this reading, so I have chosen a near synonym that does. The Patna Dhp renders this term as "subtle," whereas the Tibetan commentary to the Udanavarga explains the line as a whole as meaning "hard for the slack to untie." Both alternatives make sense, but may be attempts to "correct"

a term that could well have originally meant "elastic," a meaning that got lost with the passage of time.

348: DhpA: In front = the aggregates of the past; behind = the aggregates of the future; in between = the aggregates of the present. See also note 385.

350: "A focus on the foul": A meditative exercise in focusing on the foul parts of the body so as to help undercut lust and attachment for the body. See note 7-8.

352: "Astute in expression, knowing the combination of sounds—which comes first & which after": Some arahants, in addition to their ability to overcome all of their defilements, are also endowed with four forms of acumen (*patisambhida*), one of which is acumen with regard to expression (*nirutti-patisambhida*), i.e., a total mastery of linguistic expression. This talent in particular must have been of interest to the anthologist(s) who put together the Dhp.

"Last-body": Because an arahant will not be reborn, this present body is his/her last.

353: According to M.26 and Mv.1.6.7, one of the first people the Buddha met after his Awakening was an ascetic who commented on the clarity of his faculties and asked who his teacher was. This verse was part of the Buddha's response.

354: This verse contains several terms related to aesthetics. Both *dhamma* (justice) and *dana* (gift/generosity) are sub-types of the heroic *rasa*, or savor. (See the Introduction.) The third sub-type of the heroic—*yuddha* (warfare)—is suggested by the verb "conquer," which

occurs four times in the Pali. *Rati* (delight/love) is the emotion *(bhava)* that corresponds to the sensitive *rasa*. In effect, the verse is saying that the highest forms of *rasa* and emotion are those related to Dhamma; the highest expression of the heroic Dhamma *rasa* is in the ending of craving.

360-361: See note 7-8.

363: "Counsel": In the context of Indian literary theory, this is the meaning of the word *manta*, which can also mean "chant." The literary context seems to be the proper one here.

368: "Stilling-of-fabrications ease": the true ease and freedom experienced when all five aggregates are stilled.

369: DhpA: The boat = one's own personhood (*atta-bhava*, the body-mind complex); the water that needs to be bailed out = wrong thoughts (imbued with passion, aversion, or delusion).

370: DhpA: Cut through five = the five lower fetters that tie the mind to the round of rebirth (self-identity views, uncertainty, grasping at precepts & practices, sensual passion, irritation); let go of five = the five higher fetters (passion for form, passion for formless phenomena, conceit, restlessness, & ignorance); develop five = the five faculties (conviction, persistence, mindfulness, concentration, discernment); five attachments = passion, aversion, delusion, conceit, views.

381: See note 368.

383: This verse, addressed to a member of the brahman caste, is one of the few in Dhp where the word *brahman* is used in its ordinary sense, as indicating caste membership, and not in its special Buddhist sense as indicating an arahant.

384: DhpA: two things = tranquility meditation and insight meditation.

385: DhpA: This verse refers to a person who has no sense of "I" or "mine," either for the senses ("not-beyond") or their objects ("beyond"). The passage may also refer to the sense of total limitlessness that makes the experience of Unbinding totally ineffable, as reflected in the following conversation (Sn.v.6):

Upasiva:

He who has reached the end:
Does he not exist,
or is he for eternity free from dis-ease?
Please, sage, declare this to me
as this phenomenon has been known by you.

The Buddha:

One who has reached the end has no criterion
by which anyone would say that—
it doesn't exist for him.
When all phenomena are done away with,
all means of speaking are done away with as well.

388: Stains = the impurities listed in note 236. On "consonance," see note 265.

389: The word "anger" here is added from DhpA, which interprets the "letting loose" as the act of retaliating with anger against one's assailant. Some translators read "brahman" as the subject not only of the second line, but also the first: "A brahman should/would not strike a brahman." However, this reading is unlikely, for a brahman (in this context, an arahant) would not strike anyone at all. If a brahman retaliates with anger to being struck, that is a sign that he is not a true brahman: thus more shame on him for having assumed a status not truly his. On the topic of how to react to violent attack, see M.21 and M.145.

390: "What's endearing & not": In the phrase *manaso piyehi, piyehi* can be read straight as it is, as "endearing," or as an elided form of *apīyehi,* "not endearing." The former reading is more straightforward, but given the reference to "harmful-heartedness" in the next line, the latter reading serves to tie the stanza together. It is also consistent with the fact that DhpA takes this verse to be a continuation of 389. Given the way in which kavya cultivated a taste for ambiguities and multiple interpretations, both readings may have been intended.

392: "Brahmin" here is used in its ordinary sense, as indicating caste membership, and not in its special Buddhist sense as indicating an arahant.

393: "He is a pure one": reading *so suci* with the Thai edition, a reading supported by the Chinese translation of the Dhp.

394: In India of the Buddha's day, matted hair, etc., were regarded as visible signs of spiritual status.

396: "Bho-sayer"—Brahmins addressed others as "*bho*" as a way of indicating their (the brahmans') superior caste. "If he has anything" (reading *sa ce* with the Burmese edition) = if he/she lays claim to anything as his/her own.

398: DhpA: strap = hatred; thong = craving; cord = 62 forms of wrong view (listed in the Brahmajala Suttanta, D.1); bridle = latent tendencies (sensuality, becoming, anger, conceit, views, uncertainty, ignorance).

400: "With no overbearing pride": reading *anussadam* with the Thai and Burmese editions. "Last-body": see note 352.

402: "*For himself, on his own, his own* ending of stress": three different ways that the one word *attano* functions in this verse.

411: According to DhpA, "attachments/homes (*alaya*)" = cravings. "Knowing": the knowledge of full Awakening (*añña*).

412: See note 39.

421: See note 348.

423: The forms of mastery listed in this verse correspond to the three knowledges that comprised the Buddha's Awakening: knowledge of previous lives, knowledge of how beings pass away and are reborn in the various levels of being, and knowledge of the ending of the effluents that maintain the process of birth.

Glossary

Aggregate (khandha): Any one of the five bases for clinging to a sense of self: form (physical phenomena, including the body), feelings, perceptions (mental labels), thought-fabrications, consciousness.

Arahant: A "worthy one" or "pure one;" a person whose mind is free of defilement and thus is not destined for further rebirth. A title for the Buddha and the highest level of his noble disciples.

Becoming (bhava): States of being that develop first in the mind and allow for birth on any of three levels: the level of sensuality, the level of form, and the level of formlessness.

Brahma: An inhabitant of the highest, non-sensual levels of heaven.

Brahman: The Brahmans of India have long maintained that they, by their birth, are worthy of the highest respect. Buddhists borrowed the term "brahman" to apply to arahants to show that respect is earned not by birth, race, or caste, but by spiritual attainment through following the right path of practice. Most of the verses in the Dhammapada use the word brahman in this special sense; those using the word in its ordinary sense are indicated in the notes.

Deva: Literally, "shining one." An inhabitant of the heavenly realms.

Dhamma: (1) Event; a phenomenon in and of itself; (2) mental quality; (3) doctrine, teaching; (4) nibbana. Sanskrit form: *Dharma*.

Effluent (asava): One of four qualities—sensuality, views, becoming, and ignorance—that "flow out" of the mind and create the flood of the round of death and rebirth.

Enlightened one (dhira): Throughout this translation I have rendered *buddha* as "Awakened," and *dhira* as "enlightened." As Jan Gonda points out in his book, *The Vision of the Vedic Poets*, the word *dhira* was used in Vedic and Buddhist poetry to mean a person who has the heightened powers of mental vision needed to perceive the "light" of the underlying principles of the cosmos, together with the expertise to implement those principles in the affairs of life and to reveal them to others. A person enlightened in this sense may also be awakened, but is not necessarily so.

Fabrication (sankhara): Sankhara literally means "putting together," and carries connotations of jerry-rigged artificiality. It is applied to physical and to mental processes, as well as to the products of those processes. In some contexts it functions as the fourth of the five aggregates—thought-fabrications; in others, it covers all five.

Gandhabba: Celestial musician, a member of one of the lower deva realms.

Heart (manas): The mind in its role as will and intention.

Indra: King of the devas in the Heaven of the Thirty-three.

Jhana: Meditative absorption. A state of strong concentration, devoid of sensuality or unskillful thoughts, focused on a single physical sensation or mental notion which is then expanded to fill the whole range of one's awareness. Jhana is synonymous with right concentration, the eighth factor in the noble eightfold path (see note 191).

Kamma: Intentional act, bearing fruit in terms of states of becoming and birth. Sanskrit form: *karma.*

Mara: The personification of evil, temptation, and death.

Patimokkha: Basic code of monastic discipline, composed of 227 rules for monks and 311 for nuns.

Samsara: Transmigration; the "wandering-on"; the round of death and rebirth.

Sangha: On the conventional *(sammati)* level, this term denotes the communities of Buddhist monks and nuns; on the ideal *(ariya)* level, it denotes those followers of the Buddha, lay or ordained, who have attained at least stream-entry (see note 22).

Stress (dukkha): Alternative translations for *dukkha* include *suffering, burdensomeness,* and *pain.* However—despite the unfortunate connotations it has picked up

from programs in "stress-management" and "stress-reduction"—the English word *stress,* in its basic meaning as the reaction to strain on the body or mind, has the advantage of covering much the same range as the Pali word *dukkha.* It applies both to physical and mental phenomena, ranging from the intense stress of acute anguish or pain to the innate burdensomeness of even the most subtle mental or physical fabrications. It also has the advantage of being universally recognized as something directly experienced in all life, and is at the same time a useful tool for cutting through the spiritual pride that keeps people attached to especially refined or sophisticated forms of suffering: once *all* suffering, no matter how noble or refined, is recognized as being nothing more than stress, the mind can abandon the pride that keeps it attached to that suffering, and so gain release from it. Still, in some of the verses of the Dhammapada, *stress* seems too weak to convey the meaning, so in those verses I have rendered *dukkha* as *pain, suffering,* or *suffering & stress.*

Tathagata: Literally, "one who has become authentic *(tatha-agata),*" or "one who is really gone *(tatha-gata),*" an epithet used in ancient India for a person who has attained the highest religious goal. In Buddhism, it usually denotes the Buddha, although occasionally it also denotes any of his arahant disciples.

Unbinding (nibbana): Because *nibbana* is used to denote not only the Buddhist goal, but also the extinguishing of a fire, it is usually rendered as "extinguishing"

or, even worse, "extinction." However, a study of ancient Indian views of the workings of fire (see *The Mind Like Fire Unbound*) reveals that people of the Buddha's time felt that a fire, in going out, did not go out of existence but was simply freed from its agitation, entrapment, and attachment to its fuel. Thus, when applied to the Buddhist goal, the primary connotation of *nibbana* is one of release, along with cooling and peace. Sanskrit form: *nirvana*.

Abbreviations

A	Anguttara Nikaya
D	Digha Nikaya
Dhp	Dhammapada/Dharmapada
DhpA	Dhammapada Commentary
Iti	Itivuttaka
Khp	Khuddakapatha
M	Majjhima Nikaya
Mv	Mahavagga
PTS	Pali Text Society
S	Samyutta Nikaya
Sn	Sutta Nipata

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In addition to the above works, I have also consulted many previous English translations and renderings of the Dhammapada, complete and incomplete, including

those by Ven. Ananda Maitreya, Babbitt, Beyer, Ven. Buddharakkhita, Byrom, Cleary, Kaviratna, Vens. Khantipalo and Susañña, Mascaro, Ven. Narada, Ven. Piyadassi, Radhakrishnan, and Wannapok, as well as Thai translations by Plengvithaya and Wannapok. In addition, I have consulted translations of the Udanavarga—again, complete and incomplete—by Sparham and Strong. I have also drawn from the Royal Thai Edition of the Pali Canon, published by Mahamakut Rajavidalaya Press, Bangkok, 1982.

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